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GOLDSMITH

# THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

Edited with Critical Introduction and  
Full Explanatory Notes

By

B. D. SATTIGIRI, M. A., LL.B.

*Professor of English,*

*Sir Parshuram Bhau College, Poona*



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## INTRODUCTION

### Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774)

"Let not his frailties be remembered ;  
he was a very great man."—*Dr. Johnson.*

"No man," wrote John Forster, "ever put so much of himself into his books as Goldsmith, from the beginning to the very end of his career." His life and his works are intimately connected. They accompany and interpret each other in such a way as to make them practically inseparable.

The life of Goldsmith falls into three stages : (1) the first stage closes with his settling down in London, (1728-1756); (2) the second (1756-1764), is the Grub-Street period, during which he had to work hard for his bread, and was more or less an anonymous hack-writer. (3) the third period (1764-1774) begins with the publication of his *Traveller* when he leapt into fame.

Oliver Goldsmith was born on November 10, 1728, at the obscure, and then inaccessible, village of Pallas or Pallasmore, in the country of Longford, Ireland. His father the Rev. Charles Goldsmith, was a poor Protestant clergyman of that Irish parish. He was noted, (like the father of the 'Man in Black') for worth and goodness of heart rather than worldly prudence. Oliver was his fifth child and second son. In 1730, Charles Goldsmith, transferred his residence to Lissoy, a quaint Irish village, within the

c.w. 1.



bounds of the new parish where he succeeded as a rector to his uncle, Mr. Green. It is the village, idealised in the *Deserted Village*.

By some, young Oliver was regarded as thick-witted and sullen, to others he seemed alert and intelligent. That he was an adept in all boyish sports is admitted ; and it is also recorded that he scribbled verses pretty early. His first notable instructor was a village school-master—Thomas or Paddy Byrne, who had been a quarter-master in Queen Anne's wars. Byrne was also a local rimer and had even composed an Irish version of the Georgics. His endless stories of his own continental adventures, and his inexhaustible legends of ghosts and banshees held his pupils spell-bound. The Goldsmith family considered that these stories were responsible for much of those wandering tendencies which appeared in Oliver's later life. From this Paddy Byrne, Goldsmith caught his first notions of literary invention and rhyming. No doubt, the germs of romance and poetry were insensibly nurtured under the influence of this first mentor. Goldsmith has immortalised him as the village schoolmaster in his *Deserted Village*, portrayed so exquisitely with incomparable vividness and humour.

" A man serene he was and stern to view ;  
I knew him well, and every truant knew."

etc.

When Goldsmith was about seven or eight, he was attacked by confluent small-pox, in its severest form, which scarred and pitted him terribly, and disfigured him for life. This probably added not a little to the "exquisite sensibility of contempt" with which he seems to have been born. From Paddy Byrne's school, Goldsmith passed to the school at Elphin, thence to Athlone, and finally to



Edgeworthstown. To the close of his Edgeworthstown experiences belongs one of the most popular incidents which exemplify the connection between his life and his work. Returning to school at the end of his last holidays, the young scholar, full of the youthful pride and swagger begotten of a borrowed mount and a guinea in his pocket, lingered on his road, with the intention of putting up, like a gentleman, at some roadside inn. Night fell, and he found himself at Ardagh, where, with an air of great importance, he inquired of a passer-by for 'the best house' (hostelry) in the neighbourhood. The person thus appealed to, a local wag named Cornelius Kelly, amused by his boyish swagger, gravely directed him to the residence of the squire of the place, Mr. Featherston. Hither Goldsmith straightway repaired, ordered supper, invited his host, according to custom, to drink with him, and, being, by that humorist fooled to the top of his bent, retired to rest, after giving particular directions as to the preparation of a hot cake for his breakfast. Not until his departure next morning, was it disclosed to him that he had been entertained in a private house. The story is too good to question; and accepted, as it has always been, it supplies a conclusive answer to those critics of *She Stoops to Conquer*, who regarded the central idea of that comedy—the mistaking of a gentleman's residence for an inn—as unjustifiably far-fetched.

At every school, we hear of him as a shy, awkward and ungainly boy, the constant butt of his school-mates because of his comically ugly face and pronounced by most of them to be a "blockhead, little better than a fool". And yet everywhere there seems to have been a liking for him as an innocent simple-hearted fellow, who, though sensitive to the jokes made at his expense, would be all right again, on the least beckoning of kindness, and who was capital

company in the play-ground at fives or ball, with those who had been his tormentors. On the whole, Johnson's oft-quoted saying about him that, 'he was a plant that flowered late, there was nothing remarkable about him when young', seems true.

At the age of seventeen, he went up to Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar. The sizar paid nothing for food and tuition, and very little for lodging; but they had to perform some menial services. To a morbidly sensitive youth like Goldsmith, the position of a semi-menial was distasteful. For a long time he fought doggedly against the proposal, but at length, yielded to the persuasions of a friendly uncle, Contarine, who had himself gone through the same ordeal. The academic career thus inauspiciously begun was far from happy. Dispirited and indolent he neglected his studies, stood low at the examinations, was turned down to the bottom of his class for playing the buffoon in the lecture-room, was severely reprimanded for ducking a constable, and was caned by a brutal tutor—Theaker Wilder—for giving a ball in the attic storey of the college to some gay youths and damsels from the city.

Early in 1747, his father was snatched from him—the father whom he so dearly loved and deeply revered. It is to his love and reverence for his father that we owe the exquisite, pathetic and finished portrait of the pastor in the *Deserted Village*, the charming sketch of the father of the Man in Black in the '*Citizen of the World*' and the accurate delineation of the *Vicar of Wakefield*. The death of his father reduced him to squalid poverty. He managed, however, to supply the pressing wants of daily life by writing ballads for street minstrels. He sold his songs for five shillings, a piece. He would, at nightfall steal out of the college "to snatch the fearful joy" of hearing them sung.

This miserable college life terminated on 27th February, 1749, when he took his B.A. degree. It is now-a-days suggested that he took a medical degree.

The only career for Goldsmith seemed to be the Church ; but he was too young to be ordained. Thereupon ensued an easy, irresponsible time which the new B.A. spent very much to his own satisfaction. He was supposed to be qualifying for orders ; but "to be obliged to wear a long wig, when he liked a short one, or a black coat, when he generally dressed in brown," observes one of his characters—the Man in Black in the *CITIZEN OF THE WORLD*, 'was a restraint upon his liberty.' Hence there is reason to believe that at this time, he followed no systematic plan of study. On the contrary he passed his time wandering, like Addison's Will Wimble, from one relative to another. This vagrant life of Oliver, was a sore trouble to all the family, who had looked forward to his taking holy orders ; but all this time was not utterly wasted. "Assuredly his mind was drawing in from the scenes around him and from the incidents and associates of daily life, that which, 'hived in his bosom like the 'bag o' the bee', he stored up to reproduce in later times with such exquisite sweetness.

His uncle Contarine at last persuaded him to present himself to the Bishop of Elphin for ordination but to his own secret satisfaction, the Bishop refused to ordain him. Some said that the refusal was due to the reports of his conduct that had reached the Bishop. Others thought that it was because he had stupidly gone to the Bishop in flaming scarlet breeches. The fact is that he was rejected. And so, another calling had to be chosen for him. He first tried tutor-life in the family of a rich gentleman. But in a year or so this appointment came to an end, because he accused his patron of cheating at cards. Then he started to emigrate to

America, with thirty pounds, but returned home penniless, after six weeks, having spent all his money on the way. Law was next thought of, but finally his uncle Contarine sent him to study medicine at Edinburgh in 1752.

After two years' stay there, he departed for Leyden, nominally to complete the medical course. His name is not enrolled in the Leyden University, nor is it known where he received that "commission to slay", which justified him in signing himself, "M.B." (Some suggest that he must have received his degree from the Louvain University).

Just before his arrival in Leyden, there had died in the town the famous Danish humorist and miscellaneous author, Baron Holberg (1684-1754) and there seems to have been much talk in Leyden circles about this remarkable man. "His ambition," as Goldsmith himself tells us, "was not to be restrained, or his thirst of knowledge satisfied, till he had seen the world. Without money, recommendations, friends, he undertook to set out upon his travels and make the grand tour of Europe on foot. A good voice and a trifling skill in music were the only finances he had to support an undertaking so expensive. So he travelled by day, and, at night, sang at the doors of peasants' houses to get himself a lodging." With great admiration Goldsmith goes on to tell what countries young Holberg travelled through and how, at length, returning to Copenhagen, he became popular as an author, was honoured with a title and enriched by the king, "so that a life begun in contempt and penury ended in opulence and esteem." What Holberg had done, Goldsmith, a genuine vagabond at heart, resolved to do; and the description he gives of Holberg's tour and his means of subsistence during it, is almost an exact description of his own tour and its shifts.

· Leaving Leyden, in February 1755, he travelled on foot,



visiting various towns in Flanders. Then passing into France, he seems to have fluted his way through the provincial villages of that country. Then through Switzerland, Goldsmith went, visiting Geneva, Basle, and Barne, and making foot excursions—among the hills and valleys. Then crossing the Alps, he descended into Italy. In Italy, he gives us incidentally to understand that his flute-playing stood him in less stead than in France, as every peasant in Italy was a better musician than himself. But he had another resource in the old custom of philosophical disputations at universities and convents, followed by dinner, a night's lodging, and a small gratuity to the successful disputant. But, indeed, the mode of Goldsmith's subsistence during his extraordinary tour is a mystery.

On the first of February 1756, he landed at Dover, after an absence of nearly two years in all. He had not a farthing in his pocket, and it took him about a fortnight to pull himself on to London. Thus, at last, he returned to London, miserably poor, but a citizen of the world whose citizenship had not been bought cheaply. 'He had unconsciously gone through a course of training and accumulated a stock of experience, of which little or nothing was to be lost.' He had acquired a wide knowledge of nature and human life, along with that easy, graceful, and perspicuous style that lends charm to his writings.

However, his vocation was still as visionary as were his means of subsistence. For a season, he was an apothecary's assistant on Fish Street Hill. Next he tried practising as a physician in a humble way in Bankside, Southwark. He soon gave up this mode of living, and became a corrector of the press in the establishment of Richardson, the famous novelist, at Salisbury Court. This quasi-literary occupation, too came to an early end, and we find

Goldsmith installed as usher at Dr. Milner's School at Peckham. He had already submitted a manuscript tragedy to the author of 'CLARISSA'; and at Milner's table, he encountered the bookseller Ralph Griffiths, proprietor of THE MONTHLY REVIEW. Struck by some remarks of Goldsmith's, and seeking for new blood to aid him in his campaign against Hamilton's CRITICAL REVIEW, Griffiths asked Goldsmith whether he could furnish some specimens of criticism. An arrangement followed under which, released from the drudgery at Peckham, Goldsmith was to receive, with bed and board, a salary which Percy calls 'handsome,' Prior, 'adequate,' and Forster, 'small.' For this, he was to labour daily from nine till two (or later) on copy of all work for his master's magazine.

This, in effect, was a turning point in Goldsmith's life, and he had reached it by accident rather than by design. Divinity, law, medicine—he had tried them all; but at letters he had never aimed. There is little to prove that he had ever been attracted to letters by ambition or by any secret consciousness of his gifts. On the contrary, to be a clergyman, a lawyer, or a doctor had seemed to him far more desirable; and it was only when he had lost all hope of success in these directions, that he turned for a livelihood to the "ANTIQUA MATER of Grub Street". Fate, it seems, mercifully thwarted him in his other pursuits, and compelled him to do that for which he was best equipped.

His tardiness to take up the pen professionally had this advantage that he entered upon his calling fairly well equipped. He was a fairly good classical scholar, more advanced than might be supposed from his own modest admission to Malone, that he could turn an ode of Horace into English better than any of them. In English poetry, too, he was well-read, especially in Dryden, Swift, Prior,

Johnson, Pope and Gay. He had a good knowledge of Shakespeare and of Farquhar. French he had acquired before he left Ireland, and he had closely studied Moliere, La Fontaine, and the different collection of *ana*. For Voltaire, he had a sincere admiration. Finally, in his discursive pilgrimage towards manhood, he had seen much of life and character, and although his standpoint as a pedestrian had limited his horizon, he had observed the face of countries through which he had travelled, making his own deductions. What he had seen he had reflected upon. He worked for Griffiths' MONTHLY REVIEW from April to September 1757. The articles were fair magazine articles of the kind then going, and something of Goldsmith's lightness and ease of style is discernible in all or most of them.

The organization of literature into a commerce, which the Tonsons may be said to have commenced, had, by this time (1757), been pretty well improved, and regularised. It was no longer on the Court or on Whig and Tory ministers, or on the casual patronage of noblemen of taste that men of letters depended, but on the demand of the general public, of readers and book-purchasers, as it could be ascertained and catered for by booksellers, making publishing their business. The centre of this book-trade was naturally London; and here accordingly, hanging on the book-sellers and writing for the newspapers and magazines, but with side-glances also to the theatres and their managers, were now congregated such a host of authors and critics by profession as had never been known in London before.

Whether the fault lay in Goldsmith's own restless nature, or whether he resented the vexatious editing of his work by Griffiths and his wife, the fact remains that with September 1757, Goldsmith's connections with him came



to an end. For the next few months, he subsisted by contributing to *THE LITERARY MAGAZINE* and by other miscellaneous practice of the pen.

The prose works of Goldsmith fall naturally into two classes—those which he wrote for bread, and those which he wrote for reputation. The ‘*Memoirs of Voltaire*’, the ‘*History of Mecklenburgh*’, ‘*the Lives of Beau Nash*’, of ‘*Parnell*’, of ‘*Bolingbroke*’; the ‘*Histories of Greece*’, of ‘*Rome*’, of ‘*England*’; and the eight volumes on ‘*Natural History*’ which, Johnson predicted, he would make as interesting as a Persian tale—these and the rest were compilations,—“honest journey work in defect of better,” as Carlyle calls it—but compilations and nothing more. They were the labours by which, as he told Lord Lisburn, he “made shift to eat and drink and have good clothes.” He was paid for them well, far better than for the work by which he now survives; and he rewarded his employers by informing all he touched with the grace of a style which was always clear, always simple, always easy and spontaneous. Yet the prose-works which he wrote for fame are of a far higher order, because, in addition to his gifts as a writer, he reveals in them his own engaging personality as a critic, a humorist, and a delineator of character.

In 1758, Goldsmith is found living in No. 12, Green Arbour Court, Old Bailey. Here he lived for nearly two years. Through part of 1758 and part of 1759, his fortunes were at their lowest. He was thinking of going out to India as a medical officer in the East India Company’s service on the Coromandel Coast. He also tried for an appointment as surgeon’s mate in Army or Navy. But he was found not qualified for the post. Goldsmith had borrowed from Griffiths for a new suit of clothes. But he pawned it away in order to relieve the distress of his land-lady,



whose husband had been arrested for debt the previous night. When Griffiths threatened to send him to jail, he promised to write for him a 'Life of Voltaire' and was set free. By April 1759, he published, "An Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe." The publication of this work makes the beginning of Goldsmith's career as an author. The book bore no author's name but the authorship of the book was no secret. This elaborate essay is superficial and inexact, but it is full of autobiographical matter and contains the first draft of some famous passages in his later writings. The Chapter, "Of Rewarding Genius in England" is a document of importance in the history of literary patronage. The "Inquiry" is the first publication of Goldsmith's in which one need now look for anything of his real mind and is still well worth reading.

His services as a contributor were now more on demand with the booksellers; and towards the end of 1759, there appears even to have been some competition among the discerning ones in the trade for the use of the light and easy pen which Griffiths had not sufficiently valued. Thus when in October 1759, the bookseller, Wilkie, started *THE BEE*, a weekly periodical of essays, dramatic criticism, etc. and also a new magazine called the *LADY'S MAGAZINE*, nominally intended chiefly for lady-readers, Goldsmith was the chief essayist and critic in the one, and the principal writer in the other. *THE BEE*, and *THE BUSYBODY*, (another periodical) were short-lived. But Goldsmith's papers in them were noted at the time and those in *THE BEE* were in such demand afterwards that they had to be reprinted.

Though London was already swarming with periodicals, Newbery, one of the booksellers, had resolved on the larger attempt of a daily newspaper to be called *THE PUBLIC LEDGER* and a magazine called the *BRITISH MAGAZINE*. It

was to secure Goldsmith's services in both these undertakings that Smollet and Newbery had called upon him. Accordingly from the first appearance of the **BRITISH MAGAZINE** on the 1st of January 1760, Goldsmith was a regular contributor to its pages. But it was in the **PUBLIC LEDGER** that he made his great hit. He had been engaged by Newbery to furnish for this newspaper an article of some amusing kind, twice a week, to be paid for at the rate of a guinea per article. He had already written one or two articles to suit, when he brought on the scene an imaginary philosopher, a Chinaman who had come to study European civilisation and was now residing in London. The adventures of this Chinaman and his observations of men and things in the western world, as recorded in letters supposed to be written by him to his friends in China, were to be the material for a series of papers. It should also consist of character-sketches, social satire, and whimsical reflections, on all sorts of subjects connected by a slight thread of story. The first of Goldsmith's "Chinese Letters", as they came to be called, appeared in the **PUBLIC LEDGER** on 24 January, 1760. They became immediately popular, and so much did they contribute to the sale of the **PUBLIC LEDGER** that Newbery gave them the most conspicuous place in the paper. Ninety-eight letters in all appeared in the course of 1760, and the last Chinese letter appeared on 14 August 1761. And these were published in May 1762 as the "Citizen of the World" in two volumes, containing in all 123 letters.

With the details of his subsequent career, we are not now directly concerned, and so we notice them very briefly. By May 1762, Goldsmith had moved from the Green Arbour Court to 6, Office Court, Fleet Street, where on 31st May, he had been visited by Dr. Johnson. The **MEMOIR OF VOLTAIRE**; and the *Life of Richard Nash* (1762) showed

that Goldsmith was master of yet another form, the little biography. His brief History of England (1764) was the earliest of the compilations that were afterwards to take a more ambitious form. Some of the Vicar of Wakefield was written in the year, 1760-1761.

In 1764, he became one of the original members of the famous (and still existing) Club, afterwards known as the Literary Club—a proof of the eminence to which he had attained with the *literati* of the time. This brought him at once into close relations with Burke, Reynolds, Beauclerk, Langton, Boswell and others of the Johnson circle. In the same year (1764), appeared the *Traveller*. In a spirit of independence which distinguishes this performance from his work-a-day output, the *Traveller* was dedicated to his brother Henry Goldsmith, to whom the first sketch had been forwarded from abroad. The *Traveller* was an immediate and enduring success. Johnson declared it to be the best poem since the death of Pope. Perhaps the most marked result of the *Traveller* was to draw attention to Oliver Goldsmith, M.B., whose name for the first time appeared on the title page of Newbery's thin eighteen penny quarto. People began to inquire for his earlier works, and thereupon came a volume of "Essays by Mr. Goldsmith" which comprised some of the best of his contributions to the *Bee*, the *Public Ledger* and the rest. The VICAR OF WAKEFIELD was then published on 27 March 1766. Meanwhile he went on with a fresh course of that compilation which paid better than his master-pieces. He edited "Poems for young Ladies" and "Beauties of English Poesy"; he wrote an English grammar; he translated a history of philosophy. But towards the close of 1766, his larger ambitions began to bestir themselves, and this time in the direction of the stage with all its prospects of payment at sight. *The*



*Good Natured Man* was brought out at Covent Garden, on 29 January 1768. It ran for nine nights, three of which brought him £400, while its sale in book-form added a hundred pounds more. In 1768, he planned and perfected a new poem *The Deserted Village*. The poem holds us by the humanity of its character-pictures, by its delightful rural descriptions, by the tender melancholy of its metrical cadences. In 1771, came his second and more successful comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*, or *The Mistakes of a Night*. During the few months of life that now remained to him, he did not publish anything, his hands being filled with promised works. His last metrical effort was *Retaliation*, a series of epitaph-epigrams, left unfinished at his death, and prompted by some similar, though greatly inferior, efforts directed against him by Garrick and other friends. On Monday, 4 April 1774, he died and was buried on the 9th, in the burial ground of the Temple Church. Two years later, a memorial was erected to him in Westminster Abbey, with a Latin epitaph by Johnson containing among other things, the often quoted words, "who left untouched scarcely any kind of writing and left unadorned none that he touched." THE TRAVELLER, THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD, THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD, and SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER form a fourfold triumph won by no other English writer.

Mr. Compton-Rickett says, "What Goldsmith did for literature, whether in prose, verse, or drama, was to sweeten and purify it from its violence, coarseness and bitter wit. . . . . . He has qualities especially his own, a tranquil magic, a tender homeliness, a light iridescent humour that will ever endear him to posterity."

### Conversational Powers of Goldsmith :

One of the problems connected with Goldsmith, which

every critic and reader has to discuss is the great divergence between his excellence as a writer and his failure as a conversationalist. Garrick, in the famous epitaph, has fixed the character for all time :

Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll  
Who wrote like an angel, but talked like poor Poll.

Boswell remarks that this opinion is greatly exaggerated, though he himself has given a number of examples where the shortcomings of Goldsmith in conversation are painfully felt. Horace Walpole called him "an inspired idiot", and in general the members of the Club often looked upon him as a butt of ridicule. When due weight has been given to all this evidence, we have also to remember that on some occasions, Goldsmith could score a point in conversation even against Dr. Johnson, as for instance, in the famous remark he once made, that 'Dr. Johnson would make even small fishes talk like whales.'

A number of explanations have been offered. Macaulay, accepting the current opinion that in conversation he was a poor Poll (i.e. a parrot), explains the phenomenon by a striking and picturesque analogy. "Minds differ as rivers differ. There are transparent and sparkling rivers from which it is delightful to drink as they flow ; to such rivers the minds of such men as Burke and Johnson may be compared. But there are rivers of which the water when first drawn is turbid and noisome, but becomes pellucid as crystal, and delicious to the taste, if it be suffered to stand till it has deposited a sediment. His first thoughts on every subject were confused, even to absurdity ; but they required only a little time to work themselves clear. When he wrote, he had that time ; and therefore his readers pronounced him a man of genius ; but when he talked, he talked nonsense,

and made himself the laughing-stock of his hearers. He was painfully sensible of his inferiority in conversation."

Goldsmith, had not the abilities to shine as a conversationalist, as one expected him to do, from his versatile genius ; and yet, he wished to shine in society. The moderate powers that he had were more than overwhelmed by Dr. Johnson and his friends who had cultivated conversation as an art. In their company, Goldsmith would often appear like an idiot or as a pure butt. And once the reputation was fastened on him, he played up to it, because of the streak of Irish humour in him. And it may be, (as Frankfort Moore maintains,) that the origin of that most unfortunate and most objectionable theory—the "inspired idiot" theory—is to be found in the English (and Scottish) misunderstanding of Irish humour. Thus, modern biographers partly challenge the old evidence, and think that it shows that Goldsmith was misunderstood by Boswell and others, because they could not understand that he consciously played the fool, while they took him seriously.

### His Character :

It is the real Goldsmith who appears in his writings. There, he could be himself. He was foolish enough in action, but no man ever turned the wisdom of retrospection to better ends than Goldsmith. In the seclusion of study, with nobody at hand to mock him, to set traps for his simplicity, or to bring his vanity to grief, he could enjoy the sympathetic companionship of his own mind. He knew his own frailties, and with the candour of a generous nature, he was not afraid to expose them in his writings. So far as his own behaviour went, he seems to have profited little by experience. The wisdom of life hardly affected his ac-



tions. At the age of forty, he was as improvident and as credulous as he had been at twenty.

Goldsmith had the kindest heart in the world. His sharp and bitter experiences are transformed into a gay and unembittered good sense. The good sense and generosity and cheerfulness which we find in his writings are not the dreams of an optimist, but the considered philosophy of one who had seen life in the rough. The philosophic cobbler and the wounded soldier do not make much of their troubles. On the other hand, they are cheerful, sharing the cheerful philosophy of their author. The Man in Black whose generosity is innate, the effect of appetite, is but an idealised picture of Goldsmith himself. And in the "City Night-Piece", the pathos is not at all artificial. The fine sentiment at the end, when he blames himself because he has not the means to relieve the misery of the poor, is as sincere as anything could be.

"In truth," says Macaulay, "there was in his character much to love, but very little to respect. His heart was soft even to weakness; he was so generous that he quite forgot to be just; he forgave injuries so readily that he might be said to invite them; and was so liberal to beggars that he had nothing left for his tailor or his butcher."

"His average income during the last seven years of his life," Macaulay further states, "certainly exceeded £400 a year; and £400 a year ranked, among the incomes of the day, at least as high as £800 a year at present. A single man living in the Temple with £400 a year might then be called opulent. Not one, in ten, of the young gentlemen of good families who were studying the law there, had so much. But all the wealth which Lord Clive had brought from Bengal, and Sir Lawrence Dundas from Germany, joined together would not have sufficed for Gold-

smith. He spent twice as much as he had". His extravagance, his love of fine clothes, his love of gambling, and his vanity are the dark spots on his character as a man. But, they are not reflected in his writings, and are more than balanced by his good qualities. If he was extravagant, he was equally, if not more, generous.

We should conclude our remarks on his character with his own words. "Those, who know me at all, know that I have always been actuated by different principles from the rest of mankind, and, while none regarded the interest of his friend more, no man on earth regarded his own less." And Dr. Johnson struck the right note when he remarked "Let not his frailties be remembered; he was a very great man."

### The Periodical Essay :

To appreciate the essays of Goldsmith in their proper perspective, it is essential to have a clear idea of the periodical essay as Steele and Addison practised it.

The periodical article, as Addison conceived it, was a new form of art. It was not, like the essays of Bacon, a string of notes, quotations and epigrams; nor, like those of Montaigne, a discursive meditation that might run to any length. The *Spectator* was printed on a single leaf. Steele saw that the essay must be short ; and Addison, that, if it was short, it must be perfect. Perfection meant a nice proportionising of parts, and unity of theme and tone. No sentence, no word, no cadence, must jar upon the reader or tax him too much. As for the matter, it was to be new, or to seem new, and yet to seem self-evident ; never disconcerting, or provocative, or strange.

Another canon was never to be wholly forgotten. Not only must there be no politics, no mud throwing, and no



gutter-gossip ; but the satire, however sharp and sure, must not be biting or bitter. The temper which the best essayists set before themselves was the temper of Addison, not that of Swift. The essayist should preach pleasantly, and at his best, preach through description rather than in the abstract. The eighteenth century essay was forced to be popular ; and hence the moral and social essay was forbidden to be too hard or too harsh for its public.

In the hands of the originators—Addison and Steele—the essay had taken many shapes: they had provided the solemn ethical discourse, adjusted to the average educated palate ; the easy raillery of bad manners, and surface foibles ; the formal ‘character’ often with a Latin label, for example, ‘Callisthenes’, or ‘Acetus’ ; the less satisfactory apologue, sham Eastern (like the Vision of Mirza, an allegory of human life ; ) or sham African, in its setting ; the literary paper, delicate and usually genial, if rather timid in its criticism ; and above all, the faithful, peaceful delineation of town or country life. All these varieties persisted and many excellent essays were produced. No foible escaped the essayists’ laughter, no abuse, their scorn ; for their motto had been, as it must continue to be, that which Steele selected for the first English periodical, the *Tatler*, “Whatever men do.”

There were very many imitators of Steele and Addison, in the next generation. But they did not succeed, as the shadow of these great names fell on them, and the readers would unconsciously compare them with their great models. After the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* had fallen into some oblivion, it was not natural that some attempt should have been made to start a paper which might do for the Georgian era what had been done for the reign of Queen Anne. That the fame of the *Spectator* was, by 1750, no longer a

serious obstacle to original effort, as Defoe asserted, is tolerably plain from contemporary evidence. It was in 1750 that the *Rambler* made the first attempt at revival, and began the second epoch of the English essay. The conditions, amid which Johnson revived the periodical essay, differed widely from those under which it originally flourished. In the interval of forty years, there had been a remarkable development of journalistic enterprise. More than 150 periodicals had been meeting the needs of the reading public. The periodical essay no longer offered any of the attractions of novelty. But in the *Rambler* the periodical essay reasserted itself and entered on the second of its two great decades—that of the *Rambler*, the *Adventure*, the *World*, the *Connoisseur*, the *Idler*, and the *Public Ledger*.

### The Public Ledger :

“The Public Ledger, or Daily Register of Commerce and Intelligence”, to give its full title, was a mercantile daily paper. It began to appear from Saturday, January 12, 1760. It consisted of four large quarto pages of four columns each, and was sold for twopence-half-penny a number. It was published at the Register Office, next the Great Toy Shop in “St. Paul’s Churchyard.” It was edited either by the dramatist Kelly, or Griffiths Jones, and identified with the name of Newbery.

The plan of the paper was to record the chief items of information, to be found in about fifty of the principal metropolitan and provincial newspapers of the day. ‘The Public Ledger’ was thus designed to serve as an index to other papers and publications, “supplying the deficiency of each from all the rest, yet not rendering any of them useless.” The news-papers which were referred to might be

consulted on the payment of a fee at the Public Ledger Office. Though this was explained to be the grand part of the plan, yet in practice, it was found that even a newspaper must have an individuality of its own. The holiday-reader was more necessary to the support of a periodical paper than the man of affairs. The accounts, therefore, of public occurrences, political essays, and above all, "criticism and literature" usurped more than their intended place, and gave to the Public Ledger a more than temporary importance.

We should remember a peculiar feature of the periodicals of those days. The articles were generally supposed to be written by the members of a club; or they would be more or less a continuous series, and a sort of a frame-work to hold together the papers was generally designed. We are not, therefore, surprised by the series of letters like the Chinese Letters appearing in the Public Ledger. Indeed, there was also another series simultaneously going on. So a series of letters, conveniently held together, was a common feature of the day.

The services of Goldsmith, who had written for John Newbery early in his literary career, were, from the first, retained for the 'Public Ledger'. He was engaged to supply two articles a week at a guinea a-piece, a contract apparently fulfilled during the year 1760. To Nos. VII and IX, Goldsmith had already contributed unsigned letters, the one on the subject of "Intolerance," the other on "The Goddess of Silence," when in No. XI on Thursday, January 24, 1760, there appeared a third letter from a fictitious merchant in Amsterdam, introducing to the good offices of a fellow-merchant in London, a mandarin and traveller, a native of Leotong (afterwards altered to Honan) in China. This was merely introductory to another letter in the same number, addressed by Lien Chi Altangi, the Chinese visitor, to the merchant in Amsterdam, giving his first impressions of Lon-



don. Thus, unostentatiously, crept into the 'Public Ledger' with only an implication of further letters to follow, the first of that series of one hundred and twenty-three epistles, which are now known to us as the "Citizen of the World."

We do not know the exact nature of the contract with Newbery. But it seems fairly certain that Goldsmith must have given more or less a clear idea of these Chinese Letters to Newbery. And that was why such a sumptuous sum was offered for the articles. Here we may refer to a letter of Goldsmith written to an old college-friend, Bryanton, whom he jocosely takes to task for having forgotten him: "God's curse, sir! Who am I? Eh! What am I? Do you know whom you have offended? A man whose character may one of these days be mentioned with profound respect in a German comment or Dutch Dictionary, . . . . If ever my works find their way to Tartary or China, I know the consequence. Suppose one of your Chinese Owanowitzers instructing one of your Tartarian Chianobacchi—you see I use Chinese names to show my erudition, as I SHALL SOON MAKE OUR CHINESE TALK LIKE AN ENGLISHMAN TO SHOW HIS. This may be the subject of the lecture, 'Oliver Goldsmith flourished in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He lived to be an hundred and three years old, and, in that age, may be justly styled the Sun of Literature and the Confucius of Europe'".

**What did exactly suggest the idea of the "Citizen of the World" to Goldsmith?**

The honour of suggesting the idea of the Chinese Letters indeed goes to (1) Montesquieu's *LETTRES PERSANES* (1721), and (2) Horace Walpole's letter,—“from Xo Ho, a Chinese Philosopher at London to his friend Lien Chi at Peking”. But to discriminate between these two and to assign their proper share is not so easy. However, even against the au-

thority of Mr. Austin Dobson, it must be said that Montesquieu's "Lettres Persanes" are the real source, the primary source, of Goldsmith's inspiration.

Horace Walpole's letter was a political squib on Admiral Byng's trial and incidentally a general attack on the English that they have merely 'names' and no ideas. (Compare Letter No. IV in the Chinese Letters.) The *Letter* was published on 13 May, 1757; and became highly popular and went through five editions. It is but natural to suppose that Goldsmith must have read the letter and enjoyed it. Not only that but the name of his Chinese Philosopher is Lien Chi, the friend to whom Walpole's *Xo Ho* is supposed to have written. Hence the claim of Walpole to have suggested the idea to Goldsmith is established beyond doubt.

But the matter is not so simple. For it is equally clear from the following remark of Voltaire quoted by Goldsmith, at about the same time (1757), that he knew the Letters of Montesquieu. "It is written in imitation of the SIAMESE LETTERS of Freny and of TURKISH SPY; but it is an imitation which shows what the originals should have been. The success their works met with was, for the most part, owing to the foreign air of their performance; the success of the 'Persian Letters' arose from the delicacy of their satire. That satire which in the mouth of an Asiatic is poignant, would lose all its force when coming from an European."

The traveller-fable is thus a form older than Montesquieu. It became popular in the periodical essays, as it was satirical in intention, and was a convenient framework. In Goldsmith's own Chinese Letters, it is not the strangeness but the delicacy of the satire that constitutes the charm of the book. Goldsmith indeed owes to Montesquieu not merely a hint, but substantially the whole of the idea. Walpole may have merely suggested the idea, but Montesquieu does something

far more important. In the *LETTRES PERSANES* of Montesquieu, there is a double thread of narrative—one, the narrative of Usbek and Rica at Paris, and the second is a story of the anarchy among the ladies—Zachi, Zelis, Roxana and the rest,—in Usbek's Seraglio at Ispahan. Zelis is the heroine of a love-story which had its beginnings in a Persian Seraglio. There is a similar double thread in the *Chinese Letters*—one, the story of Altangi and his comments on English customs and manners ; the second, the love-story of Hingpo and Zelis. The name Zelis is thus a clear indication that Goldsmith owes it to Montesquieu, as the name Lien Chi is an indication of what he owes to Horace Walpole.

Once more, coming to details, we notice that many topics are to be found in the *Chinese Letters*, not because they are the inevitable matters of observation to a foreigner, but because they are already in Montesquieu, and so, they are clearly adopted from him. Thus it was the theatre, the women,—their beauty, their powder and patches, their matrimonial relations, their love of gaming—, the coffee-houses, the curiosity of the inhabitants, their religion, their funeral rites, their courts of justice, arrest the judgment of Usbek and Rica as they attract the critical observation of Altangi.

So the fact stands quite clear that Goldsmith owed much more to Montesquieu than he did to Walpole. Yet the idea might have first struck him by his reading Horace Walpole's letter. As the letter created such a stir, he may have conceived the idea of elaborating it. In the actual execution, however, he has clearly taken the cue from Montesquieu. In this connection, it is not fanciful to remark that the idea of a Chinese traveller-philosopher may have struck the fancy of Goldsmith as peculiarly appropriate to himself ; for was he not himself a traveller-philosopher ? Goldsmith was not writing an autobiography, nor was he drawing exclusively upon



his own life. He was only using such materials as came within his own experience, and so, when for the series of letters in the *Public Ledger*, a convenient 'character' was required for his delicate satire and humourous sarcasm, he must have thought of the Chinese traveller-philosopher as the one most appropriate to himself.

Whatever Goldsmith may have borrowed from others, it does not detract from his originality because the traveller-fable was a common-property, a device too often used by the essayists ; and the delightful characters—the Man in Black and Beau Tibbs—are his own creations.

### The Traveller-fable :

The traveller-fable is at once easy and dangerous. If the writer is content to leave the foreigner a mere abstract figure, the speaking picture of the author himself, without character, or a national soul of his own, or if he is to be merely a splenetic, peaking and puling at everything he sees, instead of a sane critic of life, the traveller-fable is very easy to write. The danger is that "the spy" may become an irresponsible cynic, that his pen may be driven more by "peak" than by a healthy desire to discover the true colours of things. The device permits to the fancy a loose rein, and to the imagination, a very large field for conceits, or allows an exuberant and immature mind to run easily into wild excess. But to write convincingly from the standpoint of a foreigner, to project oneself dramatically into the foreigner, and to look at things consistently from that point of view is difficult, and taxes all the ingenuity of the writer. But the form has certain obvious advantages to a satirist of society.

The mere fact that a stranger looks at the society gives to his vision a certain *naïveté*, a quaintness, an attraction

which is worth all the trouble. Even commonplace things look uncommon, and appear strangely distorted. And so unconscious humour is created. Secondly, a satire which would appear malicious or audacious in the person of the essayist himself would lose much of its sting, if it is supposed to be the comment of a stranger. There is naturally an advantage in thus varying the angle of satire. But the traveller supplies not only the author's point of view, but something different in addition. He is not a mere mouth-piece of the author ; and so, the additional point of view may be occasionally utilised to comment on the good points or may serve to flatter the reader and thus secure his sympathy.

We can understand the advantage of the double angle, if we consider the part played by the detective's friend in the detective stories. Dr. Watson, for an instance, the friend of Sherlock Holmes, is an illustration in point. As we read the story, we feel that we understand things better, see them more clearly than Dr. Watson does. Thus we are in a better humour to appreciate the fine, delicate strokes in the story ; and we watch with greater interest the unfolding of the mystery.

Similarly, in the *Citizen of the World*, Goldsmith's formula, consciously or unconsciously, has been to show the simplicity, the *naïveté* of the philosopher first. The English reader has his hearty laugh at the philosopher. But gradually, the subtle point of view is presented, and so the reader does not feel humiliated by the superiority of the Chinese Philosopher. He only feels that there are occasional gleams of good sense in the Chinese Philosopher, and so he is prepared to accept them, if he feels so inclined. There is no prejudice which a satire generally excites. Many of the *Letters* can be cited as examples ; but we may particularly

refer to the satire on wigs, ladies' trains, quack doctors, and the theatre and the visit to St. Paul's and the Westminster Abbey. We can feel the advantage if we mentally compare what these would have been, if Goldsmith were to write in his own person. The advantage of this double angle is seen even in the introduction of the Man in Black. This Man in Black supplies another point of view, generally a muddle-headed, sentimental or conventional point of view. The Chinese Philosopher's views are thus set against the background of the Man in Black. If the Man in Black were not there as a foil, the views would have lost much of their effectiveness. The views would, no doubt, have been the same, but it is the artistic presentation that has made them so telling and effective.

Goldsmith, therefore, has utilised the idea of the philosopher to the highest purpose. At his best, the philosopher is Goldsmith himself. He has not only Goldsmith's wisdom, but also Goldsmith's sense of humour. At other times, he is a Chinese or merely a stranger, puzzled with foreign things and alien civilization, and misunderstanding them. The reader would not attribute all the remarks of the Chinese Philosopher to Goldsmith himself. It means that Goldsmith has succeeded in conceiving a character different from himself. The characteristic traits are not many, and yet the figure is not completely shadowy. That means that Goldsmith has thus succeeded, to some extent, in the difficult task of lending a foreign air to his performance.

### The Local Colour :

Another great difficulty of the traveller-fable is to secure the local colour. If the traveller-philosopher is a Chinese, there must be many Chinese traits in the story, or in the descriptions. Goldsmith certainly took some pains in order

to acquaint himself with something of the Chinese national character and customs that would suffice to throw the proper amount of local colour into his work. To keep up the fiction, in almost every essay, he tries to make an ostentatious display of his Chinese knowledge, by comparing English and Chinese customs and other things. He refers to the Chinese wall, the Feast of Lanterns, the small feet of the Chinese women, to Confucius, and to Tien, and so on. In the Editor's Preface, he tells us that the metaphors are all taken from the east, and in one of the essays, he notes that the apostrophe is an actual translation from *Ambulaaohmed*. In another delightful essay, he makes fun of those who would think Lien Chi Altangi as a pseudo-Chinaman. He ridicules their ideas by pointing out that they cannot at all distinguish between the Persian and the Chinese, and by showing from French authorities that the Chinese are learned even in Latin. He further contends that Altangi was a sensible philosopher rather than an outlandish idiot. All these facts go to show that Goldsmith did not spare any pains in making the disguise effective. Yet it is quite easy for a modern reader to show many of his inaccuracies; for instance in describing his visit to the theatre, Altangi says that the Chinese plays last for eight days, and that there are no soliloquies in the Chinese plays. Both these details are inaccurate. Indeed, one may say with Macaulay that Goldsmith was never accurate in anything. As, in his *Animated Nature* and in his *Geography*, he did not scruple to create new species and new mountains to suit his argument, so also in these letters, his China is often another name for Utopia. In such letters, a contrast of English life and manners with those of China is naturally necessary, and the China of Goldsmith's imagination supplies it, no matter whether the facts support his statement or not. The contemporary readers of the Chinese



Letters were sufficiently ignorant of China, and it did not at all matter to them what Goldsmith told them of China or of her customs. Of course, Goldsmith is wise enough not to make his China too much of a Utopia, and so occasionally, there are defects in his China, or defective manners among the Chinese. The Chinese law-courts, for instance, are veritable rat-traps ; it is very easy to enter them but very difficult to get out of them.

No reader of to-day goes to the *Chinese Letters* for an account of Chinese life and manners. Nor is the interest really centred in the quaint contrast of Chinese life with English life. It is not right to blame Goldsmith for not maintaining consistently a realistic Chinese point of view. The real centre of interest is English life, as it essentially appears, not to a Chinaman, but to Goldsmith. The only thing is that, instead of criticising English life as he himself saw it, he introduces a picturesque fiction that a Chinaman is looking at it. The introduction of the Chinaman brings with it an element of quaintness, and so makes the satire far more delicate and entertaining. Goldsmith has also taken sufficient care to give it a dash of local colour by an occasional reference to China, by profuse metaphors and quaint phrases and such other details. The reader is not allowed to forget the fiction, and that is all that is required.

The Chinese philosopher was a man with sound commonsense, and so he differed but little from any sensible man. The veneer of Chinese civilization was, by hypothesis, to be slight ; and every effort was made to give us as much of it as Goldsmith could possibly get. As Prof. Elton puts it : " Goldsmith borrows gaily, and for the most part silently from many authorities on China ; often actually translates ; follows *Lettres Persanes* of Montesquieu and other models ;

trusts in his public knowing as little as himself of the real east ; and keeps the show going by his mother-wit."

Goldsmith never seriously proposed to criticise England from the point of view of the Chinaman. "A conception imparting unity was important, just as it is important to have a string for a necklace of pearls ; consistency to the Chinese point of view was as completely subordinate as a question of the texture of the string."

So the local colour—the Chinese local colour of the *Citizen of the World*—is sufficient for its artistic purpose, and it matters very little that, on closer inspection, it is found to be a sham one.

### The real interest of the *Citizen of the World* :

It is not the adroitness of his adaptations from Le Conte, Du Halde and other authorities on China that should detain us now. The purely oriental part of the work is practically dead wood. It is Goldsmith under the transparent disguise of Lien Chi, Goldsmith commenting, after the manner of Addison and Steele, upon Georgian England, that attracts and interests the modern reader. What delights us now almost as much as it delighted the readers of Goldsmith's day is the freshness and variety with which, his mind 'stored with miscellaneous observation of thirty years' turns from one subject to another. His Chinese Philosopher might well have wondered at the lazy puddle, moving muddily along the ill-kept London Streets, at the large feet and the white teeth of women, at the unwieldy sign-boards with their non-descript devices, at the unaccountable fashion of lying-in-state. But it is Goldsmith, and Goldsmith only, who could have conceived the admirable humour of the conversation on Liberty (Letter No. IV) between a prisoner through his grating, a porter, pausing from his burden to denounce slavery



and the French, and a soldier advocating above all, with a tremendous oath, the importance of religion. It is Goldsmith again—Goldsmith of the Green Arbour Court and Griffiths' back-parlour—who draws from a harder experience than could have been possible to Lien Chi, the satiric picture of the so-called republic of letters which forms his twentieth letter : "Each looks upon his fellow as a rival, not an assistant in the same pursuit. They calumniate, they injure, they despise, they ridicule each other : if one man writes a book that pleases, others shall write books to show that he might have given still greater pleasure, or should not have pleased at all."

Literature, in its different aspects, plays not a small part in the lucubrations of Lien Chi. Two of the best letters are devoted to a whimsical description of the vagaries of some of its humbler professors who hold a Saturday Club at the Broom at Islington. Others treat of the decay of poetry ; of the necessity of intrigue or riches as a means to success. Nor are art and drama neglected. Travellers and their trivialities are freely ridiculed. There are papers on the Newmarket races ; on the Coronation ; on the courts of justice ; on quacks ; gaming ; face-paint ; mourning and mad dogs. There is a letter on the irreverent behaviour of the congregation in St. Paul's ; there is another on the inequity of making shows of public monuments. Now and then, a more serious note is struck, as when the author touches upon graver subjects such as the low standard of public morality and the savage penal code of the day, which, 'cementing the laws with blood' closed every avenue with a gibbet."

In short, as Mr. Black remarks : "In these garrulous, whimsical and sometimes serious papers, Lien Chi Altangi does not describe so much the aspects of European civiliza-

tion which would naturally surprise a Chinaman, as he expresses the dissatisfaction of a European with certain phases of the civilization around him. It is not a Chinaman, but a Fleet-Street author by profession who speaks."

But what in these Chinese Letters is even more remarkable than their clever raillery of social incongruities and abuses, is the delineation of humorous characters—like the Man in Black, and Beau Tibbs, and his wife.

**The title : " Citizen of the World " :**

These Chinese Letters, when they were collected into two volumes, were given the title of the " Citizen of the World or Letters from a Chinese Philosopher residing in London, to his friends in the East." The title was obviously suggested by the words in the last essay : " As for myself, the world being one city to me, I do not much care in which of the streets I happen to reside." The Citizen of the World is, of course, Lien Chi Altangi, the wanderer, who so often in his acts shows himself a cosmopolite and a lover of man.

In one of the Chinese Letters, in March 1760, writing in the ' Public Ledger ', on the doctrines of Confucius, Goldsmith has represented them as drawing close the bonds of society, and as teaching men " to become the citizens of the world." The moral code of Confucius inculcated the highest ideals of the duty of man to man. Goldsmith was thus enforcing upon men the doctrines of universal brotherhood. He was teaching men to be citizens of the world. It is as if he had created his Chinese Philosopher to emphasise the one great virtue of universal charity and care for the individual, and had brought him to the English shores to discover this virtue in the English race. The French nation had refused assistance to its own sons, prisoners of war, rotting in English prisons. Enemies they were to England,

but enemies in distress. A subscription list was opened ; and all the names for relief were English. One had written these words upon the paper, enclosing his benefaction : " The mite of an Englishman, a citizen of the world, to Frenchmen, prisoners of war, and naked." " Such a one, my friend," remarks the Chinese Philosopher " is an honour to human nature ; he makes no private distinctions of party ; all that were stamped with the divine image of their creator are friends to him ; he is a native of the world."

This then is a citizen of the world, a man of such humanity and sensibility of nature, that his ideals are raised one degree above patriotism. A patriot thinks of his own country, and his love is often measured by his hatred of others. A patriot is thus narrow in his outlook, and does not love humanity. Patriotism, thus understood, is a half-way house, and one finds that it must grow into a wider love and sympathy—the love of the world. A patriot should try to be a citizen of the world, and not merely a bigoted lover of a particular street of it. Such local attachment would be too narrow. A citizen of the world is a cosmopolitan, universal in his charity and a lover of mankind.

Thus the title was not only an attractive one, but had a significance ; for it is suggestive of the lesson Goldsmith wanted to convey. His Chinese Philosopher was not a Chinese " patriot ", but a citizen of the world. And so his comments, whatever they were, were inspired, not by prejudice, but by the true love of humanity. He has brought with him a larger, cosmopolitan view, as one who has had knowledge and experience of different countries. No Englishmen need, therefore, take sides against the Chinaman, but should accept his criticism in the best spirit, as coming from a citizen of the world—from a friend, and not from a prejudiced stranger.



## "The frame-work of the Chinese-Letters."

Whenever there are a number of stories or letters to be brought in one collection, it is convenient to have a frame-work, an enveloping story which should connect and hold together these separate items. This is not a new device and is found in the 'Arabian Nights,' Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales' and other works. When Goldsmith was to contribute two articles a week to the 'Public Ledger', he would naturally think of a convenient framework to hold together, however loosely, these articles of his. His design was that these letters were to be supposed to be the correspondence between the Chinese Philosopher, Lien Chi Altangi and his friends Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking, in China, and Hingpo, his son, a slave in Persia, and a Merchant in Amsterdam. Lien Chi Altangi would write home about his own adventures and his observations on English life, customs and manners. This single thread would have certainly sufficed, but it seems that Goldsmith wanted to exploit the romantic vein in him and not merely the critical, realistic vein. He, therefore, thought that there should be a second string to his bow : he should introduce the adventures and love-episode of the Chinaman's son. We do not know, how far this section of the Chinese Letters was popular. The modern reader is not at all impressed by it and even finds it dull. But it appears to me that the original idea was that it should engage the sympathy of all readers, particularly the sentimental readers who may not like the satirical papers. However, these papers are not many, and the conclusion seems to be plain that they were not much of a success. As Sir Edmund Gosse remarks, we have only one novel of Goldsmith, and so from the story of Hingpo we cannot at all determine whether Goldsmith could

have written a thrilling romantic story. The opportunity was there, and some papers of the story are good. But on the whole, the plot-interest is too slight and the coincidences too glaring.

No sooner has Lien Chi Altangi arrived in England than he hears in the first letter from Fum Hoam of the disaster at home. The Emperor was highly displeased at his departure and has confiscated all his property and has carried away his wife and daughter as slaves. But his son, Hingpo, was hidden away from the officers by Fum Hoam himself and was anxious to meet his father.

No sooner has Hingpo left the confines of China than misfortunes begin to befall him. The English reader had often heard of the Tartar and other bandits and to him, therefore, there would be nothing unnatural in the story of Hingpo being carried away by a band of Tartars and sold as a slave. Hingpo writes to his father how he was passing his days miserably as a slave in a country, where his intellectual faculties were of no use to him. Then he tells us that he was sold over again to a Persian tyrant, Mostadad. Once more, we get a conventional picture of the Persian court with its tyranny and slaves. Here comes on the scene a beautiful Christian slave, one Zelis. Naturally Hingpo falls in love with her, though he knows that his passion is almost hopeless. Further details about Zelis—her feigned consent, to become a Mohammedan and marry Mostadad, her approach to Hingpo for help, their betrayal and their sudden rescue on the eve of the marriage of Zelis—are then explained in due course. Once the lovers effect their escape, they reach the valley of the Wolga. But now, the pirates pursue them, and in the effort to dodge them, the lovers are separated. For, the ship, in which the women and valuable effects were sent off, was wrecked and the in-



mates were carried away by the peasants up the country. Hingpo goes to Moscow, and thence travelling by land to Amsterdam, at last, arrives in London. By this time, Zelis too, had reached London, and the Chinese Philosopher chanced one evening to meet her, in the company of the Man in Black. But the greatest surprise was awaiting them. For when the Man in Black came with his niece to meet Altangi and his son, the lovers recognised each other. The niece was none but Zelis, the beautiful Christian slave.

Now there was no impediment to their marriage ; and it was soon celebrated. Hingpo and his bride were happily settled in London, while Altangi and the Man in Black go on to travel from country to country. Such in short is the loose story which holds together the Chinese Letters.

### Character of Altangi :

Lien Chi Altangi, the Chinese Philosopher, the citizen of the world, is not merely a figure-head, a personified abstraction ; neither is he a fully realised, individual character. Goldsmith has dowered him with the best of his intellect and his own sense of humour. But he has also some of the simplicity or *naïvete* which is a part of the design. The character of Altangi is, therefore, a mixed one : we laugh at his simplicity, but we are also struck by his insight and profundity.

The introductory letter tells us that he was a Chinese mandarin and a philosopher. Impelled by the curiosity to see the world and particularly England, he undertakes the long journey from China to England. He is not a mere patriot, but has reached a higher stage of virtue—he is ‘the citizen of the world.’ Being a philosopher, he can go to the root of the matter, can understand the real nature of things, and can also say how the things should be. He has the

standard of Nature within him, and he is not swayed by local variations or peculiarities. At times it appears that he has still his Chinese prejudices, as for instance, when he remarks that the English ladies are horrible, because they have not the graces of the Chinese ladies ! But such occasions are very rare. Whenever he seems to contrast the English manners and customs with the Chinese ones, he does so merely to mark the difference, and not necessarily to recommend the Chinese ones. Thus, for instance, when he points out that the Chinese plays last for eight days continually, the detail is noted only to show the difference and not at all to recommend to the English that their plays should also last for so many days, or even to suggest that they should last longer than they do. In the same letter, however, occurs another remark about the soliloquies. Such soliloquies, says he, are 'never admitted in China.' Here obviously the Chinese practice is recommended. But it is done so, not because it is Chinese, but because it is consonant with reason.

Indeed, the Chinese prejudice is occasionally aired to give a Chinese colouring to the correspondence. If, at times, the English reader is tickled by it, it is meant that he should be.

Allied to this Chinese prejudice is his ignorance of English customs and manners, and hence his pose of simplicity, his pose of being puzzled by the ordinary English manners and customs. He finds many things strange, which an ordinary Englishman would take to be quite common or natural. Thus, for instance, he is surprised by the seating accommodation in the theatre, that the rich sit in the pit, while the poor seem to be raised. He cannot at all understand the "variety entertainments" in the interval, nor the importance of dancing. He is surprised to find the English gentlemen wearing wigs and he calls the ladies' trains their

tails, and thinks that they are a remnant of European barbarism. He is puzzled to see so much value attached to the silken rags, the banners of others nations captured in war ! He calls the Election campaign a feast. He gravely remarks that eating seems to make a grand ingredient in all English parties of zeal, business or amusement. " When the poor are to be relieved, the officers appointed to dole out charity, assemble and eat upon it : nor has it ever been known, that they filled the bellies of the poor till they had previously satisfied their own." Illustrations of this kind will be found in almost every letter. For it is a part of the design to poke sly fun at the philosopher also.

But the Chinese Philosopher also shows a subtle insight, a new point of view, the worth of which would be admitted by every sensible man. Goldsmith's subtlety at its highest is thus revealed in some remarks put into the mouth of Altangi. To take some examples : we see that the Westminster Abbey should really have been reserved for genuine merit and that no man should be remarkable merely for having a tomb in Westminster Abbey. At the Coronation also, we see his insight when he remarks that in politics as well as in religion, aids to veneration are required : " an Emperor, in his night-cap, would not meet with half the respect of an Emperor with a glittering crown." In the theatre, too, his remarks are full of sound commonsense. ' Pity ', he remarks ' is a short-lived passion ' and absurd stories cannot hold the attention long. Indeed, whatever the topic, the insight of the Chinese Philosopher is a credit to him : of course, it is also a credit to Goldsmith. The well-known dialogue on liberty between a prisoner, the porter and the soldier is a striking instance. Only a master of irony could device such an eloquent situation.

The teaching of the philosopher is plain and simple. He

wants men to follow reason and to love humanity. He is not a mere satirist, out to find fault with everything, to bark at petty incongruities, but a citizen of the world who knows that there are local variations which have their own value, and one who also knows that there is the Goddess of Reason whose worshippers we must be. Everything must be brought to the test of reason, and if it is found wanting, the sooner it is reformed the better. The philosopher is impressed by the cheery outlook of the cobbler, and of the wounded soldier, and notes that "an habitual acquaintance with misery is the truest school of fortitude and philosophy." Yet, he knows very thoroughly the real nature of poverty, and how the young and the inexperienced are led by its false glorification. He has a sense of humour, and he is not led by mere words.

On the whole, though not a fully realised individual character, the Chinese Philosopher shares some of the best characteristics of Goldsmith himself. He is loved and liked by the readers as Goldsmith is. He is liked all the more, because of his simplicity. We do not look down with contempt on his ignorance, but laugh good-humouredly at him, and so, come to love him, because of this weakness in him. He is not a mere embodiment of intellect, but is human like ourselves—liable to error, and affected and moved by misfortune and the sufferings of others.

### **The Man in Black :**

The framework of the story gave an opportunity to Goldsmith to draw full length portraits, and he availed himself of this opportunity to create the character of the Man in Black, and the splendid masterpiece of Beau Tibbs and his wife.

The Chinaman must have some friend or other to accom-



pany him and to introduce him to various aspects of English life. The merchant to whom he was introduced by his friend in Amsterdam could hardly serve the purpose. Mr. Drybone, the Man in Black, whom he first meets in the Westminster Abbey thus becomes the friend and companion of the Chinaman and accompanies him to the theatre, to the club of authors, to the park, to Vauxhall Gardens, and so on.

But we value the Man in Black, not merely because he is a friend of the Chinaman and plays a convenient part in the machinery of the story. But we value him because he is a 'character', a humorist in a nation of humorists, an eccentric man of a peculiar type whom we love the more, the more we consider him. When we first meet him in Westminster Abbey, he seems to grow impatient at the sententious remarks of the Chinese Philosopher, and tells him that a certain man was remarkable for nothing but for having a tomb in Westminster. But beneath what appears to be a suppressed indignation, there runs the subtle vein of sarcasm, as his subsequent observations clearly show (Letter XIII). But we come to know him and love him when we see the real goodness of his heart. He pretends to deprecate charity and the relief of the poor, but at the same time the real warmth of his heart is betrayed by his actually relieving the beggars. The three episodes, coming one after the other, reveal fully his warm heart and expose the cynicism he has assumed. He is reluctantly good, reviling, in the very act of relieving, the objects of his benevolence. We have thus in the Man in Black an inverted form of hypocrisy. He would hide his noble heart by his cynic sentiment; he would do good deeds not only without ostentation but with a surly countenance. While he was hate-a-hypocrite, when he is exposed and seen in his true colours, we equally naturally



love the Man in Black, when the innate nobility of his heart is thus revealed, in spite of himself.

The concrete presentation of this humorous character was so striking and life-like, that Goldsmith was led to give a detailed history of this strange character. He himself loved this Man in Black, as he was an idealisation of his own character as he understood it. Hence, in the history of the Man in Black, he has drawn very freely upon his own experiences. It is not, however, true to say that the Man in Black is Goldsmith himself, that he is a complete picture of Goldsmith himself. The important traits in the Man in Black—his glowing heart, his innate goodness, his native generosity—are certainly drawn from Goldsmith's own character ; but, the other elements are not to be found in the author. It is, after all, an imaginary, simple character, and not the complex character of Goldsmith himself. It is a literary reconstruction of a simple formula.

If Goldsmith draws so freely on his own life and experiences, it means that either he has no 'dramatic' capacity of conceiving characters, or *that he thinks of this character as peculiarly autobiographic*—peculiarly revealing himself, as he thought he was. The first alternative is not satisfactory, because, even in the *Citizen of the World*, we have an example in Beau Tibbs of his capacity to go beyond himself. So, the Man in Black is Goldsmith's own idealised character of himself. His history is given in detail to make the character life-like and to give it a psychological consistency.

The Man in Black inherits a sensitive, and generous temperament, and it is further trained and developed in that direction by the influence of his father, by his education and by the environment. The point requiring explanation was how he came to put on a cynic pose, to profess worldly

wisdom opposed to his natural benevolence. It is the bitter experience of the world that teaches him that it is no good to have a good-nature in this world : it is rather a great handicap ; for such a man is a failure everywhere. So, if he would be true to himself, he should put on, as a sort of protection, the opposite attitude. Thus he comes to be a paradox in himself. The essential good-nature is hidden under a mask of ill-nature.

Yet the character of the Man in Black is not consistently developed round this central trait ; or to put it the other way, there are other traits revealed in other essays which do not seem to constitute one single entire character. His character seems to me to be dictated by the necessity of the plot and does not seem to flow from this central trait. The remarks he makes in the theatre or as regards the congregation in St. Paul's Cathedral—these and many other impressions are not harmonised with the central conception. They would be in character, if we consider them ironical in intention. We should suppose that he, too, like the Chinese Philosopher considered the aposiopesis silly, but only pretended to praise it ; or, that he knew that there was no devotion in the congregation, but would not say so to the Chinese.

It is not, of course, impossible to harmonise them in one character. But we think that Goldsmith himself had not thought of them all as emanating from a single character ; they are merely patches and threads. They can rather be explained by the necessity that the friend of the Philosopher should be an Englishman with a conventional outlook, and if possible, should serve as a foil, by his simple or naïve remarks, to the subtleties of the philosopher. That is why the Man in Black, as against the philosopher, is always shown to be wrong. If we are to say that this is a

part of his pose, we are not taken into the secret, and so, we feel unconvinced. Anyhow, the character is not as successful, or as consistent as that of Beau Tibbs; and that is a measure of its value.

### Beau Tibbs and Mrs. Tibbs :

If Goldsmith was, to some extent, restrained in the characterization of the Man in Black, he seems to have given a free rein to his powers in the drawing the character of Beau Tibbs and the portraiture is done with a surer and firmer hand. Even here, we can watch the development in the presentation of the character. For, in the first essay about Beau Tibbs, the moral aspect is obtruded at the end. But in the later essays, the question of morals does not arise, and we enjoy the portrayal in itself as a work of art.

The idea of the character is not in itself very humorous. The little hanger-on of fashion, the beggarly dandy, is a familiar figure in the eighteenth century literature, but Beau Tibbs transcends the mere type and stands by himself. As Goldsmith presents the figure concretely, it becomes a masterpiece of humorous characterization. The Beau pretends to be on intimate terms with the aristocracy and in the thick of fashion and constantly chatters about the Countess of All-Night, Duchess of Piccadilly, Lord Grogam and others. He is a snob who would look down on the merchants and men of the lower middle-class. Yet he is poor, and all his affectation is easily exposed. When we, therefore, detect the incongruity between his professions and the fact, we cannot but laugh at him. We, however, laugh good-humouredly at him, because Goldsmith has presented the character not at all as a satire, but in an indulgent, kindly way. His affectation appears to us to be innocent, and

merely ridiculous ; and the greater the incongruity, the greater is our amusement. His resourcefulness in lying, like Falstaff's, only wins our admiration, and not hatred. What strikes us most is his good-natured cheerfulness : he would facetiously describe his garret as the first floor down the chimney, and would pretend that he would not part with his lodgings, with their 'prospects', for thousands.

The excellence of the character-sketch lies in this that it is not a set description, but is revealed by means of dialogue, by the words of Beau Tibbs himself. The speeches of the Beau in their garrulity, their assumed smartness, their facetiousness not only give us the required information but characterise the speaker. A very high level of excellence is reached in this revealing talk of Beau Tibbs. The character stands completely revealed. The Beau at once comes to life. He is a living character, and not merely, a character-sketch or a description of a character.

So thoroughly does Goldsmith seem to have grasped his character that he could introduce him in any set of circumstances and reveal the same traits. This convincingly life-like portraiture is achieved in the second essay where the Beau takes the Chinaman to his lodgings. Every detail is in keeping with the character. His poverty, and his futile attempts to hide it, his lofty manner of transforming the uncomfortable facts of life, all stand self-revealed. The details about the maid-servant are inimitable, and reveal the man in his true colours. He is too poor to afford any but a Scotch hag for his maid-servant. And yet, in his talk, she is glorified as an old and privileged family servant—"the gift of a friend of mine, a Parliament man from the Highlands" !

Everybody has praised the character of the Beau. But



the character of Mrs. Tibbs deserves equal, if not more, praise. She is the worthy wife of the Beau. For she, too, has learnt to pretend and does it much better than her husband. Little did she suspect that she had already been given out by the maid that she was washing the "two shirts". Yet when she comes in dishabille, she excuses her delay by saying that she had stayed all night with the countess listening to the French horns, and immediately goes on to give details of what 'my lord' said about her husband and how he drank his health—all fictitious, imaginary details. When it comes to the question of preparing something for the dinner, she, far from being perplexed, goes on eloquently to describe the dish as she would prepare it, "a nice pretty bit of ox-cheek, piping hot, and dressed with a little of my own sauce,"—the sauce which has such glorious aristocratic associations! In the visit to the Vauxhall Gardens, we see her in all her glory. We see her in her triumph against the vulgar pawn-broker's widow. Every detail is exquisitely set forth. The sparring between the second-hand faded gentility of Mrs. Tibbs and the vulgarity of the pawn-broker's widow is inimitable. Mr. and Mrs. Tibbs at last succeed in convincing the pawn-broker's widow that her very senses were vulgar, and she is prepared to listen and to improve. And when the widow herself presses Mrs. Tibbs to sing, she has no mercy for the audience—not even for the poor widow, who is struggling to go out to see the water works for which she has purposely come. In the meanwhile the water works were over, and the widow's anger knows no bounds and she insists upon going home, but Mrs. Tibbs goes on with her talk of society, as if nothing had happened (Letter XXXI).

Indeed, we entirely agree with Austin Dobson when he says, "If Goldsmith had written nothing but this miniature trilogy of Beau Tibbs—if Dr. Primrose were unin-

vented and Tony Lumpkin, non-existent—he would still have earned a perpetual place among the English humorists.”

### Goldsmith as an Essayist :

Among the successors and imitators of Addison and Steele in the eighteenth century, Goldsmith is by far the greatest and the most successful essayist. By temperament, he was best fitted to be an essayist. Indeed, as Dr. Johnson has remarked of him, he adorned all departments of literature which he touched, and the essay is not the least amongst them. He had a wide experience of life and character ; and bitter as his experiences were, they did not affect his temper. On the other hand, he could good-humouredly laugh at them, as he did at the poverty of the authors in that famous essay describing a meeting of the authors' club (Letter XXX). The cheery optimism that we find in him is not of the cheap type but it is hard won ; and it is this consciousness that gives value to his observations. All his observations on men and life are the outcome of his own experience or meditation. In short, the matter of Goldsmith's essays is the same commonplace topics as were the stock-in-trade of the Queen Anne essayists—the follies and foibles of men and women, the affectations, the theatre, and the like ; but they are handled with a freshness and charm that are all his own.

In the 'Citizen of the World' Goldsmith has a great advantage of the device of the Chinese Philosopher. With the Chinese Philosopher as his mouthpiece, he could be subtle or naïve by turns as much as he liked ; and even the trite commonplace topics appear new and strange from the foreigner's point of view. For instance, we may consider the Chinaman's visit to Westminster Abbey or to the theatre. But there are essays, which owe nothing of their excellence

to the device. The description of the proceedings of the authors' club, for instance, hardly owes anything to the device of the Chinaman ; so also the great dialogue on liberty between the prisoner, the porter and the soldier owes little or nothing to the fiction of the Chinaman. Yet the device was a happy stroke, and it served to bring out the best that was in him. Without it, Goldsmith was already a great essayist in the BEE, but with it he seems to find a proper medium. Indeed, no series of essays has been as popular as the Chinese Letters.

Another secret of Goldsmith's greatness as an essayist is his style which has an exquisite lightness and grace about it. The advantage that Goldsmith has with this style of his can well be realised when we compare him with Dr. Johnson. Dr. Johnson was an eminently clubbable man and had a fund of sound commonsense and observation. If only he were to write as he conversed, he would have been a great essayist, but that he could not. But Goldsmith could wield a lighter style which has all the charm of conversation,—of urbane delightful conversation.

Lastly, the secret of all great essayists is that they reveal, in their essays, their personality ; and, in the last analysis, the greatness of the essayists depends upon the charm of the personality so revealed. Indeed, the eighteenth century essay was rather a portraiture of society than a revelation of the essayist ; and to this extent, the essays of Goldsmith are not, all of them, primarily written to reveal his personality. Yet in almost every essay of Goldsmith we seem to come in contact with his personality, directly or indirectly. In the essays like 'A City Night-Piece', 'the Man in Black', or those which reveal the philosophy of the wounded soldier, we seem to be brought in direct contact with him, whereas, in the other essays, in the good nature,

the gentle and kindly satire of Altangi, we feel the presence of Goldsmith himself. The more we learn to feel the personality of Goldsmith behind these essays, the more we enjoy them.

The modern reader finds the moralising of the eighteenth century essays dull ; and even Goldsmith is occasionally dull. But his moralising is often toned down by the subtlety, or boldness, or originality of his views. While the ideas of Addison are parochial, those of Goldsmith are cosmopolitan. They even transcend the local and the present and foreshadow the future and the universal.

Goldsmith was an all-round man of letters, and not merely an essayist. Yet his rank as an essayist is very high. As an essayist, he has much of the charm of Steele, and has equalled Addison on his own ground, and even occasionally surpassed him.

### Goldsmith as a Satirist :

The essayists like Addison, Steele and others who wrote in the periodicals were not primarily satirists but were humorists, and so satire is incidental in their presentation and portraiture. Indignation is at the root of satire, and the object of the satirist is not merely to make the object of his satire ridiculous, but to ask the reader to pass a judgment on it and to condemn it. The humorist, on the other hand, is keenly alive to the absurdity of the thing, to its ridiculousness. Yet he has a sort of love for it : he does not condemn it outright. Once we grasp this fundamental difference between humorous treatment and satiric treatment, and remember the object of Addison and Steele in holding up to ridicule the petty follies and foibles of their times, we can see that these essayists were rather humorists than satirists. They were not burning with social indignation but were



rather tickled by the absurdities of the social fashions, manners, and other follies and foibles. No doubt, they also wished to reform society, and so they were not humorists pure and simple. That is why they can be considered as gentle satirists.

Goldsmith is the most amiable of satirists, as we find him in the Chinese Letters. He was temperamentally incapable of savage satire. And, the device of the Chinese Philosopher, too, rules savage satire out, for the Philosopher is a lover of humanity, and is moved by pity, rather than by indignation. Again, as laughter is every now and then turned against the philosopher himself, his satire has to be gentle, for the satirist has lost some of the awe in which he is held. He is no longer infallible; and, if he pretends to mount the stilts, it would not be difficult to bring him to the ground.

Goldsmith must have keenly felt the poverty of authors, their jealousy among themselves, and the unfair competition of the titled authors. Yet even such a thing, so close to his own life, calls forth, not his anger, but humour. The description of the proceedings of the club of authors is written in a strain of rollicking humour (Letter, XXX.) Goldsmith himself seems to be laughing at their absurdities, though he must have at the same time felt the pathos of their situation. A poor author is lured to a sponging house by the false invitation from an Earl. The situation as described is comic, indeed. But nothing more is required but our deep sympathy for the poor author to make the same incident pathetic. Goldsmith's bitter experiences did not sour his temper, and, he could look with sufficient detachment, look with a humorous attitude, even at his own miseries.

Once, therefore, the spirit of Goldsmith is thus understood, it is not difficult to see how gently he ridicules some

of the follies and foibles. For instance, he laughs at the custom of wearing periwigs, as if wisdom consisted in the hair, as it did in the case of Samson ; and that, too, not in their own hair, but the hair of others, clapped on their head. (Letter III). Looked at from that point of view, how absurd the fashion appears ! Similarly, the fashion of a lady's train is ridiculed. He calls those trains, their tails and remarks that the beauty and status of the ladies depends on the length of those tails ! He compares the difficulties of a lady with a train when she has to turn, to those of a crocodile (Letter LXXXI). Such mockery alone, if anything, could go a long way in checking such fashions. For when such ridiculous images are associated with them, the fashions begin to lose their glamour, and the way is prepared for changing them. In the same strain, he ridicules the horse races at Newmarket and parodies them by describing a cart race (Letter LXXXVI). If the ridiculous images catch hold of our fancy, the races at Newmarket would ever remind us of the cart-race, and we would often see how essentially ridiculous they are.

Goldsmith's satire on the quack-doctors deserves a careful analysis ; for, here, the device of the Chinaman is utilized to the utmost. Altangi assumes a grave tone and so the irony is biting to the bone. He does not say that these doctors are ignorant, but gravely explains that many of them become conscious of their powers only when they are reduced to bankruptcy or when they are in jail. He even gravely recommends to these quacks to undertake to cure the dead, hinting that it should not be impossible for them when they already work so many miracles. (Letter XXIV).

Similarly, his remarks on the theatre, on the election, on the behaviour of the congregation at St. Paul's or the

absurdity of charging a fee to see the public monuments and so on, reveal the lightness of his touch.

Like Elia, (i.e. Charles Lamb), Goldsmith does not "like all people alike"; among the more pronounced of his 'imperfect sympathies' are lawyers, doctors, the clergy, and the new sect called Methodists.

Goldsmith was carrying on the tradition of the *Spectator* to laugh at the follies of the day and to recommend the minor morals. A gentle satirist alone could do it, and Goldsmith was such a one *par excellence*.

## Originality and Sanity of his Views

The most important thing about the essays of Goldsmith is the extraordinary power, boldness and originality of thought shown in them. In this respect, Goldsmith is greatly superior to Addison or any other of the periodical essayists. Goldsmith is, perhaps, the most original man of his time. We do not commonly associate his name with political ideas; and yet he gives expression to political conceptions more profound than those of any contemporary, except Burke. Goldsmith saw the menace of the strength of Russia long before those, who called themselves statesmen, were awake to it. He detected the danger of the position of England in the American colonies and analysed in a masterly fashion the pretensions of England and France, to regions that really belonged to neither. Again, the orthodox economists of the nineteenth century thought that the way to advance was to implant new desires. Goldsmith knew it before them. Speaking of the benefits of luxury in making a people wiser and happier, he says: "Examine the history of any country, remarkable for opulence and wisdom, you will find they would never have been wise, had they not been first luxurious; you will find poets, philo-

sophers, and even patriots, marching in luxury's train. The reason is obvious. We then only are curious after knowledge, when we find it connected with sensual happiness." It would be easy to carp at this and to point out that it is untrue to say that we are curious after knowledge, *only* when it is connected with sensual happiness. It is true that the desire to gratify the senses was at the start, and remains still, one of the great causes of the activity of intellect.

Goldsmith was sometimes inconsistent. He never harmonised the phases of truth which he saw successively ; but there were few men of his time who saw so many.

In general, we are struck by the GENERAL SANITY OF HIS VIEWS, as for instance, in his reflections on the "high" living of the clergy, on election extravagance, the epidemic terror, and the silly prepossessions of the people, on the Newmarket races, ladies' head-dresses, their long trains, and on sentimental tragedy, as well as in his views on society in general. No author is as remarkable as Goldsmith for the unpremeditated and casual introduction of pregnant thought. The mind of the author comments on the meanest experiences of life, and leads him to reflections, that are most profound. For instance, he has gone to buy "silk for a nightcap", and the importunity of the shopman persuades him to the purchase of a waist-coat and a morning gown. Thereupon, he cannot help reflecting that a man with such a confined education and capacity could yet mould him so to his purpose : "the wisdom of the ignorant," he profoundly remarks, "somewhat resembles the instinct of animals ; it is diffused in but a very narrow sphere, but within that circle it acts with vigour, uniformity, and success." For another example, we may turn to his comment on the proverb that he who retires to solitude is either a beast or an angel. He maintains that he is neither,



but merely some good-natured man who started life without experience and knew not how to gain it in his intercourse with mankind.

### Goldsmith Looks Beyond Local and Temporal Absurdities :

"The chief merit of the 'Citizen of the World' lies in the author's faculty to look beyond local and temporal absurdities, and with deep insight to render the picture of their absurdities a lasting portrait" (Leigh Hunt).

A traveller who describes what he sees from the outside is to Goldsmith only a vagabond. He must enter into the genius of the nations, and in his narration, must rather instruct the heart than indulge his imagination. Goldsmith has expressed his contempt of the ordinary traveller and his tales, by his parody of a Visit to Kentish Town. He very gravely writes : "There is one omission, for which I expect no forgiveness : namely, my being totally silent upon their buildings, roads, rivers and mountains." Of course, the words are ironical. It shows that the Citizen of the World is not a book of that kind.

Again, in one essay, Goldsmith tries to understand the essential characteristics of the English common people, of the vulgar ; because he thinks that their character is not touched by civilization. He does not attach any moral value to it. It has a scientific value, because the character can be better studied there. In the same essay, he remarks that England would be the last country in the world where he would go for mere amusement, but the first where he would go for instruction. For, here, the people do not reveal their good qualities to the stranger, at once ; and that is why he has to study them, patiently and carefully. Only a philosopher can go to the root, and understand them. Thus, in

another essay, he remarks that the English confer their obligation with a surly aspect ; and contrasts here the French manners with the English. If an Englishman is to part with his raincoat for his friend, he would do so with the remark that it is of no use to him, and so his friend may well have it ; but, if it is a Frenchman, he would do so, with an air of obliging him—that he would not part with it for anybody but such a bosom friend.

However, the point of the remark is not that the essayist should deal only with the national character, but that, in the points chosen for comments, the essayist should show a deep insight, and should not be merely led away by temporary, or local traits. Here, for instance, most of the topics have such a permanent value that we, readers of the twentieth century, can read them with interest. For instance, the letter on the 'epidemic terror'—about the mad dogs—was written to serve the topic of the day ; and yet, the essay is not completely antiquated. Similarly , the essay on the quacks can be read with interest even today, though the methods of the modern quacks are different. There are of course, some essays which have lost their value, as their subject-matter is out of date. For instance, the visit to the theatre appears distinctly out of date. So, also, the essay on the election. But the essays dealing with the Man in Black, or Beau Tibbs have a perennial interest and value.

So, on the whole, the *Citizen of the World* remains a classic, and its chief merit lies in Goldsmith's faculty of looking beyond the local and temporal absurdities, and in the insight he shows in giving them a more or less universal value. The actual details may have lost their meaning. But the reader applies them to modern conditions, almost unconsciously : thus they become symbolic, and acquire a new meaning.

## Goldsmith and the Republic of Letters :

Goldsmith did not become an author by choice ; but, on the other hand, tried almost all professions, and only as the last resource, turned to literature as a profession. He must have seen the misery of the hack writers ; and, in the earlier stages, from 1757 to 1759, he must have experienced it, at its bitterest. After the success of the 'Chinese Letters,' his position was much improved ; and if he still led a miserable life, it was due, not to the inadequate payment for his labour, but to his own extravagant habits.

It is but natural, that, at this stage, his thoughts were running on the state of authors, and the organization of literature as a profession. He had expressed some of his views in his "*Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning, in Europe,*" (1759). In the "*Chinese Letters*", too, the subject is often discussed. From these we learn that Goldsmith set a very high value on the profession of literature. As civilization advances, the authors become necessary, for they are the real teachers of men. It is for the State to look after them, and to provide for them, as they now provide for the clergy. In short, the question of patronage occupied his thought. For, the men of letters looked back wistfully to the days of Prior, Congreve, Steele and Addison, when the man of letters could bet the patronage of the State. But, during the days of Walpole, and after, the State ceased to care for the services of the men of letters. Again, the men of letters could not get the same patronage from the aristocracy as in the earlier days. From the humorous account of proceedings of the Authors' Club, we know how some of the authors complained of the decay of this patronage, and how they were deceived by false hopes. Indeed, the men of letters now came to depend not

on the aristocratic patron, but on the large reading public, and on the booksellers who were the middlemen. As yet, in the transitional period, their position was precarious. Only, when the reading public became large, could the successful, or popular author expect a decent remuneration. However, during the days of Dr. Johnson and Goldsmith this literary revolution was complete, as could be seen in the defiant letter of Dr. Johnson to the Earl of Chesterfield.

Goldsmith bitterly notes that the attitude of the English public to the author by profession was not sympathetic. A titled author, who pursued the profession of letters, not for money, was highly valued ; but if the author professed that he lived by writing, immediately he was suspect (Letter XXX). Yet, the profession would not reach a level of efficiency, unless the authors devoted themselves wholly to it. It is interesting to note that Goldsmith took advantage of this public prejudice by publishing the *History of England* as the work of a noble lord !

We do not know whether Goldsmith really suffered from critics. But, in the "Inquiry", as well as in the "Citizen of the World" (Letter XIII), he is bitter against the critics. He complains that they have no qualifications, that they are ignorant, and that they are interested in pulling down men of genius. The republic of letters is not a republic, but an anarchy, for every member of the profession does not stand by the other members, but hates them, as if they are taking the bread out of his mouth.

However bitter the experience of Goldsmith himself might have been, he is a humourist ; and so, he presents light-heartedly the humorous aspects of the world of letters. The visit to the Authors' Club, and the Proceedings of the Club are humorous sketches, and not satires ; and so, they leave a better impression on our mind,



Literature cannot be a lucrative profession for all ; but, the squalor and the infamy has passed from it, and it has become an honourable profession, as it deserves to be. In this evolution, Goldsmith, along with others, has played an honourable part. He would work for bread, and write compilations ; but, he would also pursue literature disinterestedly, and write his masterpieces—*The Traveller* and the *Deserted Village*, and others—not for bread, but because of the undying flame within him.

### Style :

Goldsmith is among the simplest of English writers. In one aspect, he differs from Addison : his diction is more metaphorical, and farther elevated above the language of common life. But in another, and more striking aspect, he resembles Addison : his simplicity is an elegant simplicity. He is not homely like Paley, nor coarse like Swift.

In the *Citizen of the World*, we do not see his style at its best, because it is supposed to be a translation of a Chinese correspondence. Hence, occasionally he tries to give it an exotic air. We, therefore, see what a command he has over a variety of styles. In the story of Hingpo, it glows with romance and passion. In 'A City Night-Piece', it has a lyric fervour, and is touching, pathetic ; while, in 'English Pride', and other essays, it is light. Garbed in the rich and graceful drapery of such language, the meanest thought, like a mean man surrounded by the circumstance of royalty, is enthroned with majesty and power. With him, style is the conscious ornament of thought.

Coming to the details of his style, we notice that the remarkable thing in him is the combination of purity of vocabulary with copiousness. One may even assert that no writer of English is at once so copious and so pure.

The light and graceful structure of his sentences cannot be too much admired. He may have learnt from Johnson to observe grammar more strictly than was usual with the Augustan writers, to balance clauses, and to round off his sentences without leaving inelegant tags. But in other respects, his style is so unlike Johnson's. His sentences are much shorter, less condensed, and less abrupt. Their diction is simple, and they have an exquisite melody. Goldsmith felt the charm of rhetorical antithesis and laboured to deliver his sayings in an antithetical form. Sometimes, he achieved even the brilliance of epigram.

Goldsmith surpasses all the English humorists in the combination of delicate wit with extravagant fun. Beau Tibbs is made to describe his garret as the first floor down the chimney. His incomparable description of an author's bed-chamber ending with the line "a cap by night—a stocking all the day" may also be taken as a humorous transfiguration of his own experience. The proceedings of the club of authors are in Goldsmith's happiest vein, and form a good illustration of his power of throwing a ludicrous colour over incidents uncomfortably near the reality of his own life.

Goldsmith was the most amiable of satirists. His ridicule is always on the side of good sense and good feeling. And he handles even his embodiments of folly and weakness tenderly, as if he loved them; as if he had a lurking toleration for them, and secretly recognised their claim to exist in their own way as varieties of multiform humanity.

Considering Goldsmith's natural tenderness, and wide acquaintance with distress, one would expect his writings to be deeply tinged with pathos. In reality, however, he is not so pathetic a writer as Sterne. His benevolence was probably more active than sentimental, just as Sterne's was

more sentimental than active. The only deeply touching letter in his 'Citizen of the World' is 'A City Night-Piece'. The only objection, says Brocklington, which can be preferred against his style is its want of emotional possibilities. This feeling is nowhere more evidenced than in the lamentations of Altangi over the desolation of his Chinese home, or those of Hingpo over the loss of his betrothed. Here we look in vain for that kind of speech, which bursting the floodgates of passion, pours upon the reader in a mighty, resistless torrent, and overwhelms him with an answering grief; or for that more mighty aposiopesis of sorrow, that pause and silence, which sickens with passion in restraint. This, however, he admits, is rather an objection to be urged against the Augustan prose in general than against Goldsmith in particular.

Goldsmith is a master of that central, dateless and classical style in the true sense of the term, the ideal of which is common to France and England. When all is said and done, when one has catalogued his peculiarities and noted his differences, when one has duly scheduled his gifts of simplicity, ease, gaiety, pathos, and humour, something still remains undefined and evasive—the something that is Genius.

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**SRINAGAR ( Kashmir )**

**DATE LOANED**

Class No. \_\_\_\_\_ Book No. \_\_\_\_\_

Acc. No. \_\_\_\_\_

This book may be kept for **14 days**. An over - due charge will be levied at the rate of **10 Paise** for each day the book is kept over - time.

[illegible]



## THE EDITOR'S PREFACE<sup>1</sup>

THE schoolmen had formerly a very exact way of computing the abilities of their Saints or authors. Escobar, for instance, was said to have learning as five, genius as four, and gravity as seven. Caramuel was greater than he. His learning was as eight, his genius as six, and his gravity as thirteen. Were I to estimate the merits of our Chinese Philosopher by the same scale, I would not hesitate to state his genius still higher ; but as to his learning and gravity, these I think might safely be marked as nine hundred and ninety-nine, within one degree of absolute frigidity.

Yet upon his first appearance here, many were angry not to find him as ignorant as a Tripoline ambassador, or an Envoy from Mujac. They were surprised to find a man born so far from London, that school of prudence and wisdom, endued even with a moderate capacity. They expressed the same surprise at his knowledge that the Chinese do at ours. *How comes it*, said they, *that the Europeans, so remote from China, think with so much justice and precision? They have never read our books, they scarcely know even our letters, and yet they talk and reason just as*

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<sup>1</sup> [i.e. Goldsmith's Preface.]

*we do.*<sup>1</sup> The truth is, the Chinese and we are pretty much alike. Different degrees of refinement, and not of distance, mark the distinctions among mankind. Savages of the most opposite climates, have all but one character of improvidence and rapacity ; and tutored nations, however separate, make use of the very same methods to procure refined enjoyment.

The distinctions of polite nations are few ; but such as are peculiar to the Chinese, appear in every page of the following correspondence. The metaphors and allusions are all drawn from the East. Their formality our author carefully preserves. Many of their favourite tenets in morals are illustrated. The Chinese are always concise, so is he. Simple, so is he. The Chinese are grave and sententious, so is he. But in one particular, the resemblance is peculiarly striking : the Chinese are often dull ; and so is he. Nor has my assistance been wanting. We are told in an old romance of a certain knight errant and his horse who contracted an intimate friendship. The horse most usually bore the knight, but, in cases of extraordinary dispatch, the knight returned the favour, and carried his horse. Thus in the intimacy between my author and me, he has usually given me a lift of his Eastern sublimity, and I have sometimes given him a return of my colloquial ease.

Yet it appears strange in this season of panegyric, when scarce an author passes unpraised either by his friends or himself, that such merit as our Philosopher's should be forgotten. While the epithets of ingenious, copious, elaborate, and refined, are lavished among the mob, like medals at a coronation, the lucky prizes fall on every side, but not one on him. I could on this occasion make myself melan-

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1 Le Comte, Vol. I, p. 210.

choly, by considering the capriciousness of public taste, or the mutability of fortune; but during this fit of morality, lest my reader should sleep, I'll take a nap myself, and when I awake, tell him my dream.

I imagined the Thames was frozen over, and I stood by its side. Several booths were erected upon the ice, and I was told by one of the spectators, that FASHION FAIR was going to begin. He added, that every author who would carry his works there, might probably find a very good reception. I was resolved however to observe the humours of the place in safety from the shore, sensible that ice was at best precarious, and having been always a little cowardly in my sleep.

Several of my acquaintance seemed much more hardy than I, and went over the ice with intrepidity. Some carried their works to the fair on sledges, some on carts, and those which were more voluminous, were conveyed in waggons. Their temerity astonished me. I knew their cargoes were heavy, and expected every moment they would have gone to the bottom. They all entered the fair, however, in safety, and each, soon after, returned to my great surprise, highly satisfied with his entertainment, and the bargains he had brought away.

The success of such numbers at last began to operate upon me. If these, cried I, meet with favour and safety, some luck may, perhaps, for once attend the unfortunate. I am resolved to make a new adventure. The furniture, frippery, and fire-works of China, have long been fashionably bought up. I'll try the fair with a small cargo of Chinese morality. If the Chinese have contributed to vitiate our taste, I'll try how far they can help to improve our understanding. But as others have driven into the market in waggons, I'll cautiously begin by venturing with a wheel-barrow. Thus

resolved, I baled up my goods and fairly ventured ; when, upon just entering the fair, I fancied the ice that had supported an hundred waggons before, cracked under me, and wheel-barrow and all went to the bottom.

Upon awaking from my reverie, with the fright, I cannot help wishing that the pains taken in giving this correspondence an English dress, had been employed in contriving new political systems, or new plots for farces. I might then have taken my station in the world, either as a poet or a philosopher, and made one in those little societies where men club to raise each other's reputation. But at present I belong to no particular class. I resemble one of those solitary animals, that has been forced from its forest to gratify human curiosity. My earliest wish was to escape unheeded through life ; but I have been set up for half-pence, to fret and scamper at the end of my chain. Tho' none are injured by my rage, I am naturally too savage to court any friends by fawning ; too obstinate to be taught new tricks ; and too improvident to mind what may happen : I am appeased, though not contented. Too indolent for intrigue, and too timid to push for favour, I am—But what signifies what am I.

*'Ελπίς καὶ σὺ τύχη, μέγα χαίρετε τὸν λιμέν' εὐδρον.  
Οὐδὲν ἐμοὶ χ' ὑμῖν παίζετε τοὺς μετ' ἐμέ*



LETTERS FROM A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD  
TO HIS FRIENDS IN THE EAST

I

Letter I.—*To Mr. \* \* \* \*, Merchant in London.*

Amsterdam.

SIR,

YOURS of the 13th instant, covering two bills, one on Messrs. 5  
R. and D., value £478, 10s., and the other on Mr. \* \* \* \*,  
value £285, duly came to hand, the former of which met with  
honour, but the other has been trifled with, and I am afraid  
will be returned protested.

The bearer of this is my friend, therefore let him be yours. 10  
He is a native of Honan in China, and one who did me signal  
services when he was a mandarine, and I a factor at Canton.  
By frequently conversing with the English there, he has learn-  
ed the language, though he is entirely a stranger to their  
manners and customs. I am told he is a philosopher, I am 15  
sure he is an honest man ; that to you will be his best recom-  
mendation, next to the consideration of his being the friend  
of, Sir,

Yours, &c.

## II

Letter II.—*Lond. From Lien Chi Altangi to \* \* \* \* \* ,  
Merchant in Amsterdam.*

FRIEND OF MY HEART,

5 *May the wings of peace rest upon thy dwelling, and the shield  
of conscience preserve thee from vice and misery* : for all thy  
favours accept my gratitude and esteem, the only tributes a  
poor philosophic wanderer can return ; sure, fortune is resolv-  
ed to make me unhappy, when she gives others a power of  
10 testifying their friendship by actions, and leaves me only  
words to express the sincerity of mine.

I am perfectly sensible of the delicacy with which you  
endeavour to lessen your own merit and my obligations. By  
calling your late instances of friendship only a return for  
15 former favours, you would induce me to impute to your  
justice what I owe to your generosity.

The services I did you at Canton, justice, humanity, and  
my office bade me perform ; those you have done me since  
my arrival at Amsterdam, no laws obliged you to, no justice  
20 required ; even half your favours would have been greater  
than my most sanguine expectations.

The sum of money therefore which you privately conveyed  
into my baggage, when I was leaving Holland, and which I  
was ignorant of till my arrival in London, I must beg leave  
25 to return. You have been bred a merchant, and I a scholar ;  
you consequently love money better than I. You can find  
pleasure in superfluity, I am perfectly content with what is  
sufficient ; take therefore what is yours, it may give you  
some pleasure, even though you have no occasion to use it ;  
30 my happiness it cannot improve, for I have already all that  
I want.

My passage by sea from Rotterdam to England, was more painful to me than all the journies I ever made on land. I have traversed the immeasurable wilds of Mogul Tartary ; felt all the rigours of Siberian skies ; I have had my repose an hundred times disturbed by invading savages, and have seen without shrinking the desert sands rise like a troubled ocean all around me ; against these calamities I was armed with resolution ; but in my passage to England, though nothing occurred that gave the mariners any uneasiness, to one who was never at sea before, all was a subject of astonishment and terror. To find the land disappear, to see our ship mount the waves swift as an arrow from the Tartar bow, to hear the wind howling through the cordage, to feel a sickness which depresses even the spirits of the brave ; these were unexpected distresses, and consequently assaulted me unprepared to receive them.

You men of Europe think nothing of a voyage by sea. With us of China, a man who has been from sight of land is regarded upon his return with admiration. I have known some provinces where there is not even a name for the ocean. What a strange people therefore am I got amongst, who have founded an empire on this unstable element, who build cities upon billows that rise higher than the mountains of Tipartala, and make the deep more formidable than the wildest tempest.

Such accounts as these, I must confess, were my first motives for seeing England. These induced me to undertake a journey of seven hundred painful days, in order to examine its opulence, buildings, arts, sciences, and manufactures on the spot. Judge then my disappointment on entering London, to see no signs of that opulence so much talked of abroad ; wherever I turn, I am presented with a gloomy solemnity in the houses, the streets, and the inhabitants ; none of that beautiful gilding which makes a principal ornament in Chinese

architecture. The streets of Nankin are sometimes strewed with gold leaf ; very different are those of London : in the midst of their pavements, a great lazy puddle moves muddily along ; heavy laden machines with wheels of unwieldly thickness crowd up every passage ; so that a stranger, instead of finding time for observation, is often happy if he has time to escape from being crushed to pieces.

The houses borrow very few ornaments from architecture ; their chief decoration seems to be a paltry piece of painting, hung out at their doors or windows, at once a proof of their indigence and vanity. Their vanity, in each having one of those pictures exposed to public view ; and their indigence, in being unable to get them better painted. In this respect, the fancy of their painters is also deplorable. Could you believe it ? I have seen five black lions and three blue boars in less than the circuit of half a mile ; and yet you know that animals of these colours are no where to be found except in the wild imaginations of Europe.

From these circumstances in their buildings, and from the dismal looks of the inhabitants, I am induced to conclude that the nation is actually poor ; and that like the Persians, they make a splendid figure every where but at home. The proverb of Xixofou is, that a man's riches may be seen in his eyes ; if we judge of the English by this rule, there is not a poorer nation under the sun.

I have been here but two days, so w'll not be hasty in my decisions ; such letters as I shall write to Fipsihi in Moscow, I beg you'll endeavour to forward with all diligence ; I shall send them open, in order that you may take copies or translations, as you are equally versed in the Dutch and Chinese languages. Dear friend, think of my absence with regret, as I sincerely regret yours ; even while I write, I lament our separation. Farewell.



## III

Letter III.—*From Lien Chi Altangi, to the care of Fipsihi, resident in Moscow ; to be forwarded by the Russian caravan to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking in China.*

5

THINK not, O thou guide of my youth, that absence can impair my respect, or interposing trackless deserts blot your reverend figure from my memory. The farther I travel I feel the pain of separation with stronger force ; those ties that bind me to my native country, and you, are still unbroken. 10  
By every remove, I only drag a greater length of chain.

Could I find ought worth transmitting from so remote a region as this to which I have wandered, I should gladly send it ; but instead of this, you must be contented with a renewal of my former professions, and an imperfect account of a 15 people with whom I am as yet but superficially acquainted. The remarks of a man who has been but three days in the country can only be those obvious circumstances which force themselves upon the imagination : I consider myself here as a newly created Being introduced into a new world ; every 20 object strikes with wonder and surprise. The imagination still unsated, seems the only active principle of the mind. The most trifling occurrences give pleasure, till the gloss of novelty is worn away. When I have ceased to wonder, I may possibly grow wise ; I may then call the reasoning prin- 25 ciple to my aid, and compare those objects with each other, which were before examined without reflection.

Behold me then in London, gazing at the strangers, and they at me ; it seems they find somewhat absurd in my figure ; and had I been never from home it is possible I 30 might find an infinite fund of ridicule in theirs ; but by long

travelling I am taught to laugh at folly alone, and to find nothing truly ridiculous but villainy and vice.

When I had just quitted my native country, and crossed the Chinese wall, I fancied every deviation from the customs and manners of China was a departing from nature : I smiled at the blue lips and red foreheads of the Tonguese ; and could hardly contain when I saw the Daures dress with their heads with horns. The Ostiacs powdered with red earth ; and the Calmuck beauties tricked out in all the finery of sheep skin appeared highly ridiculous ; but I soon perceived that the ridicule lay not in them but in me ; that I falsely condemned others of absurdity, because they happened to differ from a standard originally founded in prejudice and partiality.

I find no pleasure therefore in taxing the English with departing from nature in their external appearance, which is all I yet know of their character ; it is possible they only endeavour to improve her simple plan, since every extravagance in dress proceeds from a desire of becoming more beautiful than nature made us ; and this is so harmless a vanity that I not only pardon but approve it : A desire to be more excellent than others is what actually makes us so, and as thousands find a livelihood in society by such appetites, none but the ignorant inveigh against them.

You are not insensible, most reverend Fum Hoam, what numberless trades, even among the Chinese, subsist by the harmless pride of each other. Your nose-borers, feet-swathers, tooth-stainers, eye-brow pluckers, would all want bread, should their neighbours want vanity. These vanities, however, employ much fewer hands in China than in England ; and a fine gentleman, or a fine lady, here dressed up to the fashion, seems scarcely to have a single limb that does not suffer some distortions from art.

To make a fine gentleman, several trades are required, but chiefly a barber : you have undoubtedly heard of the Jewish champion, whose strength lay in his hair : one would think that the English were for placing all wisdom there : To appear wise, nothing more is requisite here than for a man 5 to borrow hair from the heads of all his neighbours, and clap it like a bush on his own : the distributors of law and physic stick on such quantities, that it is almost impossible, even in idea to distinguish between the head and the hair.

Those whom I have been now describing, affect the gravity 10 of the lion : those I am going to describe more resemble the pert vivacity of smaller animals. The barber, who is still master of the ceremonies, cuts their hair close to the crown ; and then with a composition of meal and hog's lard, plasters the whole in such a manner, as to make it impossible to 15 distinguish whether the patient wears a cap or a plaster ; but to make the picture more perfectly striking, conceive the tail of some beast, a greyhound's tail, or a pig's tail for instance, appended to the back of the head, and reaching down to that place where tails in other animals are generally seen 20 to begin ; thus betailed and bepowdered, the man of taste fancies he improves in beauty, dresses up his hard-featured face in smiles, and attempts to look hideously tender. Thus equipped, he is qualified to make love, and hopes for success more from the powder on the outside of his head, than the 25 sentiments within.

Yet when I consider what sort of a creature the fine lady is, to whom he is supposed to pay his addresses, it is not strange to find him thus equipped in order to please. She is herself every whit as fond of powder, and tails, and hog's 30 lard as he : to speak my secret sentiments, most reverend Fum, the ladies here are horridly ugly ; I can hardly endure the sight of them ; they no way resemble the beauties of

China : the Europeans have a quite different idea of beauty from us ; when I reflect on the small footed perfections of an Eastern beauty, how is it possible I should have eyes for a woman whose feet are ten inches long. I shall never forget  
 5 the beauties of my native city of Nenfew. How very broad their faces ; how very short their noses ; how very little their eyes ; how very thin their lips ; how very black their teeth ; the snow on the tops of Bao is not fairer than their cheeks ; and their eye-brows are small as the line by the pencil of  
 10 Quamsi. Here a lady with such perfections would be frightful ; Dutch and Chinese beauties indeed have some resemblance, but English women are entirely different ; red cheeks, big eyes, and teeth of a most odious whiteness, are not only seen here, but wished for ; and then they have such masculine  
 15 feet, as actually serve *some* for walking !

Yet uncivil as nature has been, they seem resolved to outdo her in unkindness ; they use white powder, blue powder, and black powder for their hair, and a red powder for the face on some particular occasions.

20 They like to have the face of various colours, as among the Tartars of Koreki, frequently sticking on, with spittle, little black patches on every part of it, except on the tip of the nose, which I have never seen with a patch. You'll have a better idea of their manner of placing these spots, when I  
 25 have finished a map of an English face patched up to the fashion, which shall shortly be sent to increase your curious collection of paintings, medals, and monsters.

But what surprises more than all the rest, is, what I have just now been credibly informed by one of this country ;  
 30 ' Most ladies here, says he, have two faces ; one face to sleep in, and another to show in company : the first is generally reserved for the husband and family at home, the other put on to please strangers abroad ; the family face is often in-



different enough, but the out-door one looks something better ; this is always made at the toilet, where the looking-glass and toad-eater sit in council, and settle the complexion of the day.'

I can't ascertain the truth of this remark ; however it is actually certain, that they wear more clothes within doors 5 than without ; and I have seen a lady who seemed to shudder at a breeze in her own apartment, appear half naked in the streets. Farewell.

#### IV

Letter IV.—*To the same.*

10

THE English seem as silent as the Japanese, yet vainer than the inhabitants of Siam. Upon my arrival I attributed that reserve to modesty, which I now find has its origin in pride. Condescend to address them first, and you are sure of their acquaintance ; stoop to flattery, and you conciliate their 15 friendship and esteem. They bear hunger, cold, fatigue, and all the miseries of life without shrinking ; danger only calls forth their fortitude ; they even exult in calamity ; but contempt is what they cannot bear. An Englishman fears contempt more than death ; he often flies to death as a refuge 20 from its pressure ; and dies when he fancies the world has ceased to esteem him.

Pride seems the source not only of their national vices, but of their national virtues also. An Englishman is taught to love his king as his friend, but to acknowledge no other master 25 than the laws which himself has contributed to enact. He despises those nations, who, that one may be free, are all content to be slaves ; who first lift a tyrant into terror, and then shrink under his power as if delegated from heaven. Liberty is echoed in all their assemblies, and thousands might be 30 found ready to offer up their lives for the sound, though

perhaps not one of all the number understands its meaning. The lowest mechanic however looks upon it as his duty to be a watchful guardian of his country's freedom, and often uses a language that might seem haughty, even in the mouth of the great emperor who traces his ancestry to the moon.

A few days ago, passing by one of their prisons, I could not avoid stopping, in order to listen to a dialogue which I thought might afford me some entertainment. The conversation was carried on between a debtor through the gate of his prison, a porter, who has stopped to rest his burden, and a soldier at the window. The subject was upon a threatened invasion from France, and each seemed extremely anxious to rescue his country from the impending danger. '*For my part, cries the prisoner, the greatest of my apprehensions is for our freedom; if the French should conquer, what would become of English liberty. My dear Friends, liberty is the Englishman's prerogative; we must preserve that at the expense of our lives: of that the French shall never deprive us; it is not to be expected that men who are slaves themselves would preserve our freedom should they happen to conquer:*

20 *Ay, slaves, cries the porter, they are all slaves, fit only to carry burdens every one of them. Before I would stoop to slavery, may this be my poison (and he held the goblet in his hand) may this be my poison—but I would sooner*

25 *list for a soldier.'*

The soldier taking the goblet from his friend, with much awe fervently cried out, *It is not so much our liberties as our religion that would suffer by such a change. Ay, our religion, my lads. May the Devil sink me into flames, (such was*

30 *the solemnity of his adjuration) if the French should come over, but our religion would be utterly undone. So saying, instead of a libation, he applied the goblet to his lips, and*

confirmed his sentiments with a ceremony of the most persevering devotion.

In short, every man here pretends to be a politician ; even the fair sex are sometimes found to mix the severity of national altercation with the blandishments of love, and often become conquerors by more weapons of destruction than their eyes. 5

This universal passion for politics is gratified by Daily Gazettes, as with us at China. But as in ours, the emperor endeavours to instruct his people, in theirs the people endeavour to instruct the administration. You must not, however, imagine, that they who compile these papers have any actual knowledge of the politics, or the government of a state ; they only collect their materials from the oracle of some coffee-house, which oracle has himself gathered them the night before from a beau at a gaming-table, who has pillaged his knowledge from a great man's porter, who had had his information from the great man's gentleman, who has invented the whole story for his own amusement the night preceding. 15

The English in general seem fonder of gaining the esteem than the love of those they converse with : this gives a formality to their amusements ; their gayest conversations have something too wise for innocent relaxation ; though in company you are seldom disgusted with the absurdity of a fool, you are seldom lifted into rapture by those strokes of vivacity, which give instant, though not permanent pleasure. 25

What they want, however, in gaiety, they make up in politeness. You smile at hearing me praise the English for their politeness : you who have heard very different accounts from the missionaries at Peking, who have seen such a different behaviour in their merchants and seamen at home. But I must still repeat it, the English seem more polite than any of their neighbours ; their great art in this respect lies in 30

endeavouring, while they oblige, to lessen the force of the favour. Other countries are fond of obliging a stranger ; but seem desirous that he should be sensible of the obligation. The English confer their kindness with an appearance of indifference, and give away benefits with an air as if they despised them.

Walking a few days ago between an English and Frenchman into the suburbs of the city, we were overtaken by a heavy shower of rain. I was unprepared ; but they had each  
 10 large coats, which defended them from what seemed to me a perfect inundation. The Englishman seeing me shrink from the weather accosted me thus : '*Psha, man, what dost shrink at ? here, take this coat ; I don't want it ; I find it no way useful to me ; I had as lief be without it.*' The Frenchman  
 15 began to shew his politeness in turn. '*My dear friend,*' cries he, '*why won't you oblige me by making use of my coat ; you see how well it defends me from the rain ; I should not choose to part with it to others, but to such a friend as you, I could even part with my skin to do him service.*'

20 From such minute instances as these, most reverend Fum Hoam, I am sensible your sagacity will collect instruction. The volume of nature is the book of knowledge ; and he becomes most wise who makes the most judicious selection. Farewell.

## V

25 Letter VI.—*Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin, to Lien Chi Altangi, the discontented wanderer ; by the way of Moscow.*

WHETHER sporting on the flowery banks of the river Irtis, or scaling the steepy mountains of Douchenour : whether travers-  
 30 ing the black deserts of Kobi, or giving lessons of politeness to the savage inhabitants of Europe ;—in whatever country,



whatever climate, and whatever circumstances, all hail ! May Tien, the universal soul, take you under his protection, and inspire you with a superior portion of himself.

How long, my friend, shall an enthusiasm for knowledge continue to obstruct your happiness, and tear you from all the connexions that make life pleasing ? How long will you continue to rove from climate to climate, circled by thousands, and yet without a friend, feeling all the inconveniences of a crowd, and all the anxiety of being alone.

I know you will reply, that the refined pleasure of growing every day wiser, is a sufficient recompence for every inconvenience. I know you will talk of the vulgar satisfaction of soliciting happiness from sensual enjoyment only, and probably enlarge upon the exquisite raptures of sentimental bliss. Yet, believe me, friend, you are deceived ; all our pleasures, though seemingly never so remote from sense, derive their origin from some one of the senses. The most exquisite demonstration in mathematics, or the most pleasing disquisition in metaphysics, if it does not ultimately tend to increase some sensual satisfaction is delightful only to fools, or to men who have by long habit contracted a false idea of pleasure ; and he who separates sensual and sentimental enjoyments, seeking happiness from mind alone, is in fact as wretched as the naked inhabitant of the forest, who places all happiness in the first, regardless of the latter. There are two extremes in this respect ; the savage who swallows down the draught of pleasure without staying to reflect on his happiness, and the sage who passeth the cup while he reflects on the inconveniences of drinking.

It is with a heart full of sorrow, my dear Altangi, that I must inform you that what the world calls happiness must now be yours no longer. Our great emperor's displeasure at

your leaving China, contrary to the rules of our government, and the immemorial custom of the empire, has produced the most terrible effects. Your wife, daughter, and the rest of your family have been seized by his order, and appropriated to his use ; all except your son are now the peculiar property of him who possesses all ; him I have hidden from the officers employed for this purpose ; and even at the hazard of my life I have concealed him. The youth seems obstinately bent on finding you out, wherever you are ; he is determined to face every danger that opposes his pursuit. Though yet but fifteen, all his father's virtues and obstinacy sparkle in his eyes, and mark him as one destined to no mediocrity of fortune.

You see, my dearest friend, what imprudence has brought thee to ; from opulence, a tender family, surrounding friends, and your master's esteem, it has reduced thee to want, persecution ; and still worse, to our mighty monarch's displeasure. Want of prudence is too frequently the want of virtue ; nor is there on earth a more powerful advocate for vice than poverty. As I shall endeavour to guard thee from the one, so guard thyself from the other and still think of me with affection and esteem. Farewell.

## VI

Letter X.—*From Lien Chi Altangi, to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking, in China.*

I HAVE hitherto given you no account of my journey from China to Europe, of my travels through countries, where Nature sports in primeval rudeness, where she pours forth her wonders in solitude ; countries, from whence the rigorous climate, the sweeping inundation, the drifted desert, the howling forest, and mountains of immeasurable height banish the husbandman, and spread extensive desolation ; countries

where the brown Tartar wanders for a precarious subsistence, with an heart that never felt pity, himself more hideous than the wilderness he makes.

You will easily conceive the fatigue of crossing vast tracts of land, either desolate, or still more dangerous by its inhabitants. The retreat of men, who seem driven from society, in order to make war upon all the human race ; nominally professing a subjection to Moscovy or China, but without any resemblance to the countries on which they depend. 5

After I had crossed the great wall, the first objects that presented themselves were the remains of desolated cities, and all the magnificence of venerable ruin. There were to be seen temples of beautiful structure, statues wrought by the hand of a master, and around a country of luxuriant plenty ; but not one single inhabitant to reap the bounties of nature. 15 These were prospects that might humble the pride of kings, and repress human vanity. I asked my guide the cause of such desolation. These countries, says he, were once the dominions of a Tartar prince ; and these ruins the seat of arts, elegance, and ease. This prince waged an unsuccessful war with one of the emperors of China ; he was conquered, his cities plundered, and all his subjects carried into captivity. 20 Such are the effects of the ambition of kings ! Ten Dervises, says the Indian proverb, shall sleep in peace upon a single carpet, while two kings shall quarrel though they have kingdoms to divide them. Sure, my friend, the cruelty and the pride of man have made more deserts than Nature ever made ! She is kind, but man is ungrateful ! 25

Proceeding in my journey through this pensive scene of desolated beauty, in a few days I arrived among the Daures, a nation still dependent on China. Xaizigar is their principal city, which, compared with those of Europe, scarcely deserves the name. The governors and other officers, who are sent 30

yearly from Pekin, abuse their authority, and often take the wives and daughters of the inhabitants to themselves. The Daures, accustomed to base submission, feel no resentment at those injuries, or stifle what they feel. Custom and necessity 5 teach even barbarians the same art of dissimulation that ambition and intrigue inspire in the breasts of the polite. Upon beholding such unlicensed stretches of power, alas, thought I, how little does our wise and good emperor know of these intolerable exactions ! these provinces are too distant 10 for complaint, and too insignificant to express redress. The more distant the government, the honester should be the governor to whom it is entrusted ; for hope of impunity is a strong inducement to violation.

The religion of the Daures is more absurd than even that 15 of the sectaries of Fohi. How would you be surprised, O sage disciple and follower of Confucius ! you who believe one eternal intelligent cause of all, should you be present at the barbarous ceremonies of this infatuated people. How would you deplore the blindness and folly of mankind ! His 20 boasted reason seems only to light him astray, and brutal instinct more regularly points out the path to happiness. Could you think it ? they adore a wicked divinity ; they fear him and they worship him ; they imagine him a malicious Being, ready to injure and ready to be appeased. The 25 men and women assemble at midnight in a hut, which serves for a temple. A priest stretches himself on the ground, and all the people pour forth the most horrid cries, while drums and timbrels swell the infernal concert. After this dissonance, miscalled music, has continued about two hours, the 30 priest rises from the ground, assumes an air of inspiration, grows big with the inspiring dæmon, and pretends to a skill in futurity.

In every country, my friend, the bonzes, the brachmans,



and the priests deceive the people ; all reformations begin from the laity ; the priests point us out the way to heaven with their fingers, but stand still themselves, nor seem to travel towards the country in view.

The customs of this people correspond to their religion ; 5 they keep their dead for three days on the same bed where the person died ; after which they bury him in a grave moderately deep, but with the head still uncovered. Here for several days they present him different sorts of meats ; which, when they perceive he does not consume, they fill up 10 the grave, and desist from desiring him to eat for the future. How, how can mankind be guilty of such strange absurdity ; to entreat a dead body already putrid to partake of the banquet ? Where, I again repeat it, is human reason ? not only some men, but whole nations, seem divested of its illu- 15 mination. Here we observe a whole country adoring a divinity through fear, and attempting to feed the dead. These are their most serious and most religious occupations : are these men rational, or are not the apes of Borneo more wise ?

Certain I am, O thou instructor of my youth ! that with- 20 out philosophers, without some few virtuous men, who seem to be of a different nature from the rest of mankind, without such as these, the worship of a wicked divinity would surely be established over every part of the earth. Fear guides more to their duty than gratitude : for one man who is virtuous 25 from the love of virtue ; from the obligation which he thinks he lies under to the giver of all ; there are ten thousand who are good only from their apprehensions of punishment. Could these last be persuaded, as the Epicureans were, that heaven had no thunders in store for the villain, they would 30 no longer continue to acknowledge subordination, or thank that Being who gave them existence. Adieu.

## VII

Letter XI.—*To the same.*

FROM such a picture of Nature in primeval simplicity, tell me, my much respected friend, are you in love with fatigue  
5 and solitude? Do you sigh for the severe frugality of the wandering Tartar, or regret being born amidst the luxury and dissimulation of the polite? Rather tell me, has not every kind of life vices peculiarly its own? Is it not a truth, that refined countries have more vices, but those not so terrible,  
10 barbarous nations few, and they of the most hideous complexion? Perfidy and fraud are the vices of civilized nations, credulity and violence those of the inhabitants of the desert. Does the luxury of the one produce half the evils of the inhumanity of the other? Certainly those philosophers who  
15 declaim against luxury, have but little understood its benefits; they seem insensible, that to luxury we owe not only the greatest part of our knowledge, but even of our virtues.

It may sound fine in the mouth of a declaimer when he talks of subduing our appetites, of teaching every sense to be  
20 content with a bare sufficiency, and of supplying only the wants of Nature; but is there not more satisfaction in indulging those appetites, if with innocence and safety, than in restraining them? Am not I better pleased in enjoyment than in the sullen satisfaction of thinking that I can live  
25 without enjoyment? The more various our artificial necessities, the wider is our circle of pleasure; for all pleasure consists in obviating necessities as they rise; luxury, therefore, as it encreases our wants, encreases our capacity for happiness.

30 Examine the history of any country remarkable for opulence and wisdom, you will find they would never have been wise had they not been first luxurious; you will find poets,

philosophers, and even patriots marching in Luxury's train. The reason is obvious ; we then only are curious after knowledge when we find it connected with sensual happiness. The senses ever point out the way, and reflection comments upon the discovery. Inform a native of the desert of Kobi, of the exact measure of the parallax of the moon, he finds no satisfaction at all in the information ; he wonders how any could take such pains, and lay out such treasures in order to solve so useless a difficulty ; but connect it with his happiness, by showing that it improves navigation, that by such an investigation he may have a warmer coat, a better gun, or a finer knife, and he is instantly in raptures at so great an improvement. In short, we only desire to know what we desire to possess ; and whatever we may talk against it, luxury adds the spur to curiosity, and gives us a desire of becoming more wise. 5 10 15

But not our knowledge only, but our virtues are improved by luxury. Observe the brown savage of Thibet, to whom the fruits of the spreading promegranate supply food, and its branches an habitation. Such a character has few vices I grant, but those he has are of the most hideous nature : rapine and cruelty are scarce crimes in his eye, neither pity nor tenderness, which ennoble every virtue, has any place in his heart ; he hates his enemies, and kills those he subdues. On the other hand, the polite Chinese and civilized European seem even to love their enemies. I have just now seen an instance where the English have succoured those enemies whom their own countrymen actually refused to relieve. 20 25

The greater the luxuries of every country, the more closely, politically speaking, is that country united. Luxury is the child of society alone, the luxurious man stands in need of a thousand different artists to furnish out his happiness ; it is more likely, therefore, that he should be a good citizen 30

who is connected by motives of self-interest with so many, than the abstemious man who is united to none.

In whatsoever light therefore we consider luxury, whether as employing a number of hands naturally too feeble for 5 more laborious employment, as finding a variety of occupation for others who might be totally idle, or as furnishing out new inlets to happiness, without encroaching on mutual property, in whatever light we regard it, we shall have reason to stand up in its defence, and the sentiment of Confucius 10 still remains unshaken ; *that we should enjoy as many of the luxuries of life as are consistent with our own safety, and the prosperity of others, and that he who finds out a new pleasure is one of the most useful members of society.*

## VIII

15 Letter XII.—*To the same.*

FROM the funeral solemnities of the Daures, who think themselves the politest people in the world, I must make a transition to the funeral solemnities of the English, who think themselves as polite as they. The numberless cere- 20 monies which are used here when a person is sick, appear to me so many evident marks of fear and apprehension. Ask an Englishman, however, whether he is afraid of death, and he boldly answers in the negative ; but observe his behaviour in circumstances of approaching sickness, and you will find 25 his actions give his assertions the lie.

The Chinese are very sincere in this respect ; they hate to die, and they confess their terrors : a great part of their life is spent in preparing things proper for their funeral ; a poor artizan shall spend half his income in providing himself a 30 tomb twenty years before he wants it ; and denies himself



the necessaries of life, that he may be amply provided for when he shall want them no more !

But people of distinction in England really deserve pity, for they die in circumstances of the most extreme distress. It is an established rule, never to let a man know that he is 5 dying ; physicians are sent for, the clergy are called, and every thing passes in silent solemnity round the sick bed ; the patient is in agonies, looks round for pity, yet not a single creature will say that he is dying. If he is possessed of fortune, his relations entreat him to make his will, as it may 10 restore the tranquillity of his mind. He is desired to undergo the rites of the church, for decency requires it. His friends take their leave only because they don't care to see him in pain. In short, an hundred stratagems are used to make him do what he might have been induced to perform only 15 by being told ; *Sir, you are past all hopes, and had as good think decently of dying.*

Besides all this, the chamber is darkened, the whole house echoes to the cries of the wife, the lamentations of the children, the grief of the servants, and the sighs of friends. The 20 bed is surrounded with priests and doctors in black, and only flambeaux emit a yellow gloom. Where is the man, how intrepid soever, that would not shrink at such a hideous solemnity ? For fear of affrighting their expiring friends, the English practise all that can fill them with terror. Strange 25 effect of human prejudice thus to torture merely from mistaken tenderness !

You see, my friend, what contradictions there are in the tempers of those islanders ; when prompted by ambition, revenge, or disappointment, they meet death with the utmost 30 resolution ; the very man who in his bed would have trembled at the aspect of a doctor, shall go with intrepidity to

attack a bastion, or deliberately noose himself up in his garters.

The passion of the Europeans for magnificent interments is equally strong with that of the Chinese. When a trades-  
5 man dies, his frightful face is painted up by an undertaker, and placed in a proper situation to receive company : this is called lying in state. To this disagreeable spectacle all the idlers in town flock, and learn to loathe the wretch dead, whom they despised when living. In this manner you see  
10 some who would have refused a shilling to save the life of their dearest friend, bestow thousands on adorning their putrid corpse. I have been told of a fellow, who grown rich by the price of blood, left it in his will that he should lie in state, and thus unknowingly gibbeted himself into infamy,  
15 when he might have otherwise quietly retired into oblivion.

When the person is buried, the next care is to make his epitaph ; they are generally reckoned best which flatter most ; such relations therefore as have received most benefits from the defunct, discharge this friendly office ; and generally  
20 flatter in proportion to their joy. When we read those monumental histories of the dead, it may be justly said, that *all men are equal in the dust* ; for they all appear equally remarkable for being the most sincere Christians, the most benevolent neighbours, and the honestest men of their time.  
25 To go through an European cemetery, one would be apt to wonder how mankind could have so basely degenerated from such excellent ancestors ; every tomb pretends to claim your reverence and regret ; some are praised for piety in those inscriptions who never entered the temple until they were dead ;  
30 some are praised for being excellent poets, who were never mentioned, except for their dulness, when living : others for sublime orators, who were never noted except for their impudence ; and others still for military achievements, who were

never in any other skirmishes but with the watch. Some even make epitaphs for themselves, and bespeak the reader's good-will. It were indeed to be wished that every man would early learn in this manner to make his own ; that he would draw it up in terms as flattering as possible ; and that he would make it the employment of his whole life to deserve it ! 5

I have not yet been in a place called Westminster Abbey, but soon intend to visit it. There I am told I shall see justice done to deceased merit ; none, I am told, are permitted to be buried there but such as have adorned as well as improved mankind. There no intruders, by the influence of friends or fortune, presume to mix their unhallowed ashes with philosophers, heroes, and poets. Nothing but true merit has a place in that awful sanctuary : the guardianship of the tombs is committed to several reverend priests, who are never guilty for a superior reward of taking down the names of good men, to make room for others of equivocal character, nor ever profaned the sacred walls with pageants, that posterity cannot know, or shall blush to own. 20

I always was of opinion, that sepulchral honours of this kind should be considered as a national concern, and not trusted to the care of the priests of any country, how respectable soever ; but from the conduct of the reverend personages, whose disinterested patriotism I shall shortly be able to discover, I am taught to retract my former sentiments. It is true, the Spartans and the Persians made a fine political use of sepulchral vanity ; they permitted none to be thus interred, who had not fallen in the vindication of their country ; a monument thus became a real mark of distinction, it nerved the hero's arm with tenfold vigour ; and he fought without fear, who only fought for a grave. 30

Farewell.



## IX

Letter XIII.—*From the same.*

I AM just returned from Westminster-abbey, the place of sepulture for the philosophers, herces, and kings of England.  
5 What a gloom do monumental inscriptions and all the venerable remains of deceased merit inspire ! Imagine a temple marked with the hand of antiquity, solemn as religious awe, adorned with all the magnificence of barbarous profusion, dim windows, fretted pillars, long colonnades, and dark ceilings.  
10 Think then, what were my sensations at being introduced to such a scene. I stood in the midst of the temple, and threw my eyes round on the walls filled with the statues, the inscriptions, and the monuments of the dead.

Alas, I said to myself, how does pride attend the puny  
15 child of dust even to the grave ! Even humble as I am, I possess more consequence in the present scene than the greatest hero of them all ; they have toiled for an hour to gain a transient immortality, and are at length retired to the grave, where they have no attendant but the worm, none to  
20 flatter but the epitaph.

As I was indulging such reflections, a gentleman dressed in black, perceiving me to be a stranger, came up, entered into conversation, and politely offered to be my instructor and guide through the temple. If any monument, said he,  
25 should particularly excite your curiosity, I shall endeavour to satisfy your demands. I accepted with thanks the gentleman's offer, adding, that 'I was come to observe the policy, the wisdom, and the justice of the English, in conferring rewards upon deceased merit.' If adulation like this, continued I, be  
30 properly conducted, as it can no ways injure those who are flattered, so it may be a glorious incentive to those who are now capable of enjoying it. It is the duty of every good



government to turn this monumental pride to its own advantage, to become strong in the aggregate from the weakness of the individual. If none but the truly great have a place in this awful repository, a temple like this will give the finest lessons of morality, and be a strong incentive to true ambition. I am told, that none have a place here but characters of the most distinguished merit.' The man in black seemed impatient at my observations, so I discontinued my remarks, and we walked on together to take a view of every particular monument in order as it lay. 5 10

As the eye is naturally caught by the finest objects, I could not avoid being particularly curious about one monument which appeared more beautiful than the rest ; that, said I to my guide, I take to be the tomb of some very great man. By the peculiar excellence of the workmanship, and the magnificence of the design, this must be a trophy raised to the memory of some king who has saved his country from ruin, or law-giver, who has reduced his fellow-citizens from anarchy into just subjection. —It is not requisite, replied my companion smiling, to have such qualifications in order to have a very fine monument here. More humble abilities will suffice. *What ! I suppose then, the gaining two or three battles, or the taking half a score towns, is thought a sufficient qualification ?* Gaining battles, or taking towns, replied the man in black, may be of service ; but a gentleman may have a very fine monument here without ever seeing a battle or a siege. *This then is the monument of some poet, I presume, of one whose wit has gained him immortality ?* No, sir, replied my guide, the gentleman who lies here never made verses ; and as for wit, he despised it in others, because he had none himself. *Pray tell me then in a word,* said I peevishly, *what is the great man who lies here particularly remarkable for ?* Remarkable, Sir ! said my companion ; why, Sir, the gentle- 15 20 25 30

man that lies here is remarkable, very remarkable—for a tomb in Westminster-abbey. *But, head of my Ancestors! how has he got here? I fancy he could never bribe the guardians of the temple to give him a place: Should he not be*  
5 *ashamed to be seen among company, where even moderate merit would look like infamy?* I suppose, replied the man in black, the gentleman was rich, and his friends, as is usual in such a case, told him he was great. He readily believed them; the guardians of the temple, as they got by the self-delusion,  
10 were ready to believe him too; so he paid his money for a fine monument; and the workman, as you see, has made him one the most beautiful. Think not, however, that this gentleman is singular in his desire of being buried among the great: there are several others in the temple, who, hated and shunned  
15 by the great while alive, have come here, fully resolved to keep them company now they are dead.

As we walked along to a particular part of the temple, There, says the gentleman, pointing with his finger, that is the poets' corner; there you see the monuments of Shakes-  
20 peare, and Milton, and Prior, and Drayton. Drayton, I replied, I never heard of him before, but I have been told of one Pope, is he there? It is time enough, replied my guide, these hundred years, he is not long dead, people have not done hating him yet. Strange, cried I, can any be found  
25 to hate a man, whose life was wholly spent in entertaining and instructing his fellow creatures! Yes, says my guide, they hate him for that very reason. There are a set of men called answerers of books, who take upon them to watch the republic of letters, and distribute reputation by the sheet;  
30 they somewhat resemble the eunuchs in a seraglio, who are incapable of giving pleasure themselves, and hinder those that would. These answerers have no other employment but to cry out Duncce, and Scribbler, to praise the dead, and revile the

living, to grant a man of confessed abilities some small share of merit, to applaud twenty blockheads in order to gain the reputation of candour, and to revile the moral character of the man whose writings they cannot injure. Such wretches are kept in pay by some mercenary bookseller, or more frequently, the bookseller himself takes this dirty work off their hands, as all that is required is to be very abusive and very dull ; every Poet of any genius is sure to find such enemies : he feels, though he seems to despise their malice ; they make him miserable here, and in the pursuit of empty fame, at last 10 he gains solid anxiety.

*Has this been the case with every poet I see here ?* cried I —Yes, with every mother's son of them, replied he, except he happened to be born a mandarine. If he has much money, he may buy reputation from your book answerers, as well 15 as a monument from the guardians of the temple.

*But are there not some men of distinguished taste, as in China, who are willing to patronise men of merit and soften the rancour of malevolent dulness ?*

I own there are many, replied the man in black, but, alas ! 20 Sir, the book answerers crowd about them, and call themselves the writers of books ; and the patron is too indolent to distinguish ; thus poets are kept at a distance, while their enemies eat up all their rewards at the mandarine's table.

Leaving this part of the temple, we made up to an iron 25 gate, through which my companion told me we were to pass in order to see the monuments of the kings. Accordingly I marched up without further ceremony, and was going to enter, when a person who held the gate in his hand, told me I must pay first. I was surprised at such a demand ; and asked the 30 man whether the people of England kept a *show* ? Whether the paltry sum he demanded was not a national reproach ? Whether it was not more to the honour of the country to let

their magnificence or their antiquities be openly seen, than thus meanly to tax a curiosity which tended to their own honour? As for your questions, replied the gate-keeper, to be sure they may be very right, because I don't understand  
5 them, but as for that there three-pence, I farm it from one, who rents it from another, who hires it from a third, who leases it from the guardians of the temple, and we all must live. I expected upon paying here to see something extraordinary, since what I had seen for nothing filled me with  
10 so much surprise; but in this I was disappointed; there was little more within than black coffins, rusty armour, tattered standards, and some few slovenly figures in wax. I was sorry I had paid, but I comforted myself by considering it would be my last payment. A person attended us, who, without  
15 once blushing, told a hundred lies; he talked of a lady who died by pricking her finger, of a king with a golden head, and twenty such pieces of absurdity; Look ye there, gentlemen, says he, pointing to an old oak chair, there's a curiosity for ye; in that chair the kings of England were crowned,  
20 you see also a stone underneath, and that stone is Jacob's pillow. I could see no curiosity either in the oak chair or the stone; could I, indeed, behold one of the old kings of England seated in this, or Jacob's head laid upon the other, there might be something curious in the sight; but in the present  
25 case, there was no more reason for my surprise than if I should pick a stone from their streets, and call it a curiosity, merely because one of the kings happened to tread upon it as he passed in a procession.

From hence our conductor led us through several dark  
30 walks and winding ways, uttering lies, talking to himself, and flourishing a wand which he held in his hand. He reminded me of the black magicians of Kobi. After we had been almost fatigued with a variety of objects, he, at last, desired



me to consider attentively a certain suit of armour, which seemed to shew nothing remarkable. This armour, said he, belonged to general Monk. *Very surprising, that a general should wear armour.* And pray, added he, observe this cap, this is general Monk's cap. *Very strange indeed, very strange,* 5 *that a general should have a cap also ! Pray friend, what might this cap have cost originally ?* That, Sir, says he, I don't know, but this cap is all the wages I have for my trouble. *A very small recompence, truly,* said I. Not so very small, replied he, for every gentleman puts some money into 10 it, and I spend the money. *What, more money ! still more money !* Every gentleman gives something, Sir. I'll give thee nothing, returned I ; the guardians of the temple should pay you your wages, friend, and not permit you to squeeze thus from every spectator. When we pay our money at the 15 door to see a show, we never give more as we are going out. Sure the guardians of the temple can never think they get enough. Shew me the gate ; if I stay longer, I may probably meet with more of those ecclesiastical beggars.

Thus leaving the temple precipitately, I returned to my 20 lodgings, in order to ruminate over what was great, and to despise what was mean in the occurrences of the day.

## X

Letter XXI.—*To the same.*

THE English are as fond of seeing plays acted as the Chinese ; 25 but there is a vast difference in the manner of conducting them. We play our pieces in the open air, the English theirs under cover ; we act by day-light, they by the blaze of torches. One of our plays continues eight or ten days successively ; an English piece seldom takes up above four hours in the 30 representation.

My companion in black, with whom I am now beginning to contract an intimacy, introduced me a few nights ago to the play-house, where we placed ourselves conveniently at the foot of the stage. As the curtain was not drawn before my  
5 arrival, I had an opportunity of observing the behaviour of the spectators, and indulging those reflections which novelty generally inspires.

The rich in general were placed in the lowest seats, and the poor rose above them in degrees proportioned to their  
10 poverty. The order of precedence seemed here inverted ; those who were undermost all the day, now enjoyed a temporary eminence, and became masters of the ceremonies. It was they who called for the music, indulging every noisy freedom, and testifying all the insolence of beggary in exaltation.

15 They who held the middle region seemed not so riotous as those above them, nor yet so tame as those below ; to judge by their looks, many of them seemed strangers there as well as myself. They were chiefly employed during this period of expectation in eating oranges, reading the story of the play,  
20 or making assignations.

Those who sat in the lowest rows, which are called the pit, seemed to consider themselves as judges of the merit of the poet and the performers ; they were assembled partly to be amused, and partly to show their taste ; appearing to  
25 labour under that restraint which an affectation of superior discernment generally produces. My companion, however, informed me, that not one in an hundred of them knew even the first principles of criticism ; that they assumed the right of being censors because there was none to contradict their  
30 pretensions ; and that every man who now called himself a connoisseur, became such to all intents and purposes.

Those who sat in the boxes appeared in the most unhappy situation of all. The rest of the audience came merely for

their own amusement ; these rather to furnish out a part of the entertainment themselves. I could not avoid considering them as acting parts in dumb show : not a curtsy or nod, that was not the result of art ; not a look nor a smile that was not designed for murder. Gentlemen and ladies ogled 5 each other through spectacles ; for my companion observed, that blindness was of late become fashionable ; all affected indifference and ease, while their hearts at the same time burned for conquest. Upon the whole, the lights, the music, the ladies in their gayest dresses, the men with cheerfulness 10 and expectation in their looks, all conspired to make a most agreeable picture, and to fill an heart that sympathises at human happiness with an inexpressible serenity.

The expected time for the play to begin at last arrived, the curtain was drawn, and the actors came on. A woman, 15 who personated a queen, came in curtsying to the audience, who clapped their hands upon her appearance. Clapping of hands is, it seems, the manner of applauding in England : the manner is absurd ; but every country, you know, has its peculiar absurdities. I was equally surprised, however, 20 at the submission of the actress, who should have considered herself as a queen, as at the little discernment of the audience who gave her such marks of applause before she attempted to deserve them. Preliminaries between her and the audience being thus adjusted, the dialogue was support- 25 ed between her and a most hopeful youth, who acted the part of her confidant. They both appeared in extreme distress, for it seems the queen had lost a child some fifteen years before, and still keeps its dear resemblance next her heart, while her kind companion bore a part in her sorrows. 30

Her lamentations grew loud. Comfort is offered, but she detests the very sound. She bids them preach comfort to the winds. Upon this her husband comes in, who seeing



the queen so much afflicted, can himself hardly refrain from tears or avoid partaking in the soft distress. After thus grieving through three scenes, the curtain dropped for the first act.

5 Truly, said I to my companion, these kings and queens are very much disturbed at no very great misfortune ; certain I am, were people of humbler stations to act in this manner, they would be thought divested of common sense. I had scarce finished this observation, when the curtain rose,  
10 and the king came on in a violent passion. His wife had, it seems, refused his proffered tenderness, had spurned his royal embrace ; and he seemed resolved not to survive her fierce disdain. After he had thus fretted, and the queen had fretted through the second act, the curtain was let down once  
15 more.

Now, says my companion, you perceive the king to be a man of spirit, he feels at every pore ; one of your phlegmatic sons of clay would have given the queen her own way, and let her come to herself by degrees ; but the king  
20 is for immediate tenderness, or instant death : death and tenderness are leading passions of every modern buskined hero ; this moment they embrace, and the next stab, mixing daggers and kisses in every period.

I was going to second his remarks, when my attention  
25 was engrossed by a new object ; a man came in balancing a straw upon his nose, and the audience were clapping their hands in all the raptures of applause. To what purpose, cried I, does this unmeaning figure make his appearance ; is he a part of the plot ? Unmeaning do you call him,  
30 replied my friend in black ; this is one of the most important characters of the whole play ; nothing pleases the people more than the seeing a straw balanced ; there is a great deal of meaning in the straw ; there is something suited



to every apprehension in the sight ; and a fellow possessed of talents like these is sure of making his fortune.

The third act now began with an actor, who came to inform us that he was the villain of the play, and intended to shew strange things before all was over. He was joined 5 by another, who seemed as much disposed for mischief as he ; their intrigues continued through this whole division. If that be a villain, said I, he must be a very stupid one, to tell his secrets without being asked ; such soliloquies of late are never admitted in China. 10

The noise of clapping interrupted me once more ; a child of six years old was learning to dance on the stage, which gave the ladies and mandarines infinite satisfaction. I am sorry, said I, to see the pretty creature so early learning so very bad a trade ; dancing being, I presume, as contemptible 15 here as in China. Quite the reverse, interrupted my companion ; dancing is a very reputable and genteel employment here ; men have a greater chance for encouragement from the merit of their heels than their heads. One who jumps up and flourishes his toes three times before he 20 comes to the ground, may have three hundred a year ; he who flourishes them four times, gets four hundred ; but he who arrives at five is inestimable, and may demand what salary he thinks proper. The female dancers too are valued for this sort of jumping and crossing ; and 'tis a cant word 25 among them, that she deserves most who shews highest. But the fourth act is begun, let us be attentive.

In the fourth act the queen finds her long lost child, now grown up into a youth of smart parts, and great qualifications ; wherefore she wisely considers that the crown will 30 fit his head better than that of her husband, whom she knows to be a driveller. The king discovers her design, and here comes on the deep distress ; he loves the queen,

and he loves the kingdom ; he resolves therefore, in order to possess both, that her son must die. The queen exclaims at his barbarity ; is frantic with rage, and at length overcome with sorrow, falls into a fit ; upon which the curtain  
5 drops, and the act is concluded.

Observe the art of the poet, cries my companion ; when the queen can say no more, she falls into a fit. While thus her eyes are shut, while she is supported in the arms of Abigail, what horrors do we not fancy. We feel it in every  
10 nerve ; take my word for it, that fits are the true aposiopesis of modern tragedy.

The fifth act began, and a busy piece it was. Scenes shifting, trumpets sounding, mobs hallooing, carpets spreading, guards bustling from one door to another ; gods,  
15 dæmons, daggers, racks and ratsbane. But whether the king was killed, or the queen was drowned, or the son was poisoned, I have absolutely forgotten.

When the play was over, I could not avoid observing, that the persons of the drama appeared in as much distress  
20 in the first act as the last : How is it possible, said I, to sympathise with them through five long acts ! Pity is but a short-lived passion ; I hate to hear an actor mouthing trifles, neither startings, strainings, nor attitudes affect me unless there be cause : after I have been once or twice  
25 deceived by those unmeaning alarms, my heart sleeps in peace, probably unaffected by the principal distress. There should be one great passion aimed at by the actor as well as the poet, all the rest should be subordinate, and only contribute to make that the greater ; if the actor therefore  
30 exclaims upon every occasion in the tones of despair, he attempts to move us too soon ; he anticipates the blow, he ceases to affect, though he gains our applause.

I scarce perceived that the audience were almost all de-

parted ; wherefore mixing with the crowd, my companion and I got into the street ; where essaying an hundred obstacles from coach wheels and palanquin poles, like birds in their flight through the branches of a forest, after various turnings, we both at length got home in safety. Adieu. 5

## XI

Letter XXII.—*From the same.*

THE letter which came by the way of Smyrna, and which you sent me unopened, was from my son. As I have permitted you to take copies of all those I send to China, you might have made no ceremony in opening those directed to me. Either in joy or sorrow, my friend should participate in my feelings. *It would give pleasure to see a good man pleased at my success ; it would give almost equal pleasure to see him sympathise at my disappointment.* 15

Every account I receive from the East seems to come loaded with some new affliction. My wife and daughter were taken from me, and yet I sustained the loss with intrepidity ; my son is made a slave among the barbarians, which was the only blow that could have reached my heart : 20 yes, I will indulge the transports of Nature for a little, in order to shew I can overcome them in the end. *True magnanimity consists not in NEVER falling, but in RISING every time we fall.*

When our mighty emperor had published his displeasure 25 at my departure, and seized upon all that was mine, my son was privately secreted from his resentment. Under the protection and guardianship of Fum Hoam, the best and the wisest of all the inhabitants of China ; he was for some time instructed in the learning of the missionaries, and the 30 wisdom of the East. But hearing of my adventures, and

incited by filial piety, he was resolved to follow my fortunes, and share my distress.

He passed the confines of China in disguise ; hired himself as a camel-driver to a caravan that was crossing the deserts of Thibet, and was within one day's journey of the river Laur, which divides that country from India, when a body of wandering Tartars falling unexpectedly upon the caravan, plundered it, and made those who escaped their first fury slaves. By those he was led into the extensive and desolate regions that border on the shores of the Aral lake.

Here he lived by hunting ; and was obliged to supply every day a certain proportion of the spoil to regale his savage masters ; his learning, his virtues, and even his beauty were qualifications that no way served to recommend him ; they knew no merit but that of providing large quantities of milk and raw flesh ; and were sensible of no happiness but that of rioting on the undressed meal.

Some merchants from Mesched, however, coming to trade with the Tartars for slaves, he was sold among the number, and led into the kingdom of Persia, where he is now detained. He is there obliged to watch the looks of a voluptuous and cruel master, a man fond of pleasure yet incapable of refinement, whom many years' service in war has taught pride, but not bravery.

That treasure which I still keep within my bosom, my child, my all that was left to me, is now a slave.<sup>1</sup> Good heavens, why was this ? why have I been introduced into this mortal apartment, to be a spectator of my own misfortunes, and the misfortunes of my fellow creatures ? Wherever I turn, what a labyrinth of doubt, error, and disappoint-

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<sup>1</sup> This whole apostrophe seems most literally translated from Ambulaaohamed, the Arabian poet. [Goldsmith's note.]



ment appears : why was I brought into being ; for what purposes made ; from whence have I come ; whither strayed ; or to what regions am I hastening ? Reason cannot resolve. It lends a ray to shew the horrors of my prison, but not a light to guide me to escape them. Ye boasted revelations 5 of the earth, how little do you aid the inquiry.

How am I surprised at the inconsistency of the magi ; their two principles of good and evil affright me. The Indian who bathes his visage in urine, and calls it piety, strikes me with astonishment. The Christian who believes in three gods, 10 is highly absurd. The Jews who pretend that deity is pleased with the effusion of blood, are not less displeasing. I am equally surprised that rational beings can come from the extremities of the earth in order to kiss a stone, or scatter pebbles. How contrary to reason are those ; and yet all 15 pretend to teach me to be happy.

Surely all men are blind and ignorant of truth. Mankind wanders, unknowing his way from morning till the evening. Where shall we turn after happiness ; or is it wisest to desist from the pursuit ? Like reptiles in a corner of some stupen- 20 dous palace, we peep from our holes ; look about us, wonder at all we see, but are ignorant of the great architect's design : O for a revelation of himself, for a plan of his universal system : O for the reasons of our creation ; or why were we created to be thus unhappy ! If we are to experience no other 25 felicity but what this life affords, then are we miserable indeed. If we are born only to look about us, repine and die ; then has heaven been guilty of injustice. If this life terminates my existence, I despise the blessings of providence, and the wisdom of the giver. If this life be my all, let the follow- 30 ing epitaph be written on the tomb of Altangi. *By my father's crimes I received this. By my own crimes I bequeath it to posterity !*

## XII

Letter XXIV.—*To the same.*

WHATEVER may be the merits of the English in other sciences, they seem peculiarly excellent in the art of healing. There is scarcely a disorder incident to humanity, against which they are not possessed with a most infallible antidote. The professors of other arts confess the inevitable intricacy of things ; talk with doubt, and decide with hesitation ; but doubting is entirely unknown in medicine ; the advertising professors here delight in cases of difficulty ; be the disorder never so desperate or radical, you will find numbers in every street, who, by levelling a pill at the part affected, promise a certain cure without loss of time, knowledge of a bedfellow, or hindrance of business.

When I consider the assiduity of this profession, their benevolence amazes me. They not only in general give their medicines for half value, but use the most persuasive remonstrances to induce the sick to come and be cured. Sure there must be something strangely obstinate in an English patient, who refuses so much health upon such easy terms ; does he take a pride in being bloated with a dropsy ? Does he find pleasure in the alternations of an intermittent fever ? Or feel as much satisfaction in nursing up his gout, as he found pleasure in acquiring it ? He must, otherwise he would never reject such repeated assurances of instant relief. What can be more convincing than the manner in which the sick are invited to be well ? The doctor first begs the most earnest attention of the public to what he is going to propose ; he solemnly affirms the pill was never found to want success ; he produces a list of those who have been rescued from the grave by taking it. Yet, notwithstanding all this, there are many here who now and then think proper

to be sick ; only sick did I say ? There are some who even think proper to die ! Yes, by the head of Confucius, they die ; though they might have purchased the health-restoring specific for half a crown at every corner.

I am amazed, my dear Fum Hoam, that these doctors who know what an obstinate set of people they have to deal with, have never thought of attempting to revive the dead. When the living are found to reject their prescriptions, they ought in conscience to apply to the dead, from whom they can expect no such mortifying repulses ; they would find 10 in the dead the most complying patients imaginable ; and what gratitude might they not expect from the patient's son, now no longer an heir, and his wife, now no longer a widow.

Think not, my friend, that there is any thing chimerical 15 in such an attempt ; they already perform cures equally strange : What can be more truly astonishing than to see old age restored to youth, and vigour to the most feeble constitutions ; yet this is performed here every day ; a simple electuary effects these wonders, even without the bungling 20 ceremonies of having the patient boiled up in a kettle, or ground down in a mill.

Few physicians here go through the ordinary courses of education, but receive all their knowledge of medicine by immediate inspiration from heaven. Some are thus inspired 25 even in the womb ; and what is very remarkable, understand their profession as well at three years old as at threescore. Others have spent a great part of their lives unconscious of any latent excellence, till a bankruptcy, or a residence in gaol, have called their miraculous powers into exertion. And 30 others still there are, indebted to their superlative ignorance alone for success. The more ignorant the practitioner, the less capable is he thought of deceiving. The people here judge,

as they do in the East ; where it is thought absolutely requisite that a man should be an idiot before he pretend to be either a conjuror or a doctor.

When a physician by inspiration is sent for, he never  
 5 perplexes the patient by previous examination ; he asks very few questions, and those only for form sake. He knows every disorder by intuition. He administers the pill or drop for every distemper ; nor is more inquisitive than the farrier while he drenches an horse. If the patient lives, then has  
 10 he one more to add to the surviving list ; if he dies, then it may be justly said of the patient's disorder, *that as it was not cured, the disorder was incurable.*

### XIII

Letter XXVI.—*To the same.*

15 THOUGH fond of many acquaintances, I desire an intimacy only with a few. The man in black, whom I have often mentioned, is one whose friendship I could wish to acquire, because he possesses my esteem. His manners, it is true, are tinged with some strange inconsistencies ; and he may  
 20 be justly termed an humourist in a nation of humourists. Though he is generous even to profusion, he affects to be thought a prodigy of parsimony and prudence ; though his conversation be replete with the most sordid and selfish maxims, his heart is dilated with the most unbounded love.  
 25 I have known him profess himself a man-hater, while his cheek was glowing with compassion ; and while his looks were softened into pity, I have heard him use the language of the most unbounded ill-nature. Some affect humanity and tenderness, others boast of having such dispositions from  
 30 Nature ; but he is the only man I ever knew who seemed ashamed of his natural benevolence. He takes as much



pains to hide his feelings as any hypocrite would to conceal his indifference ; but on every unguarded moment, the mask drops off, and reveals him to the most superficial observer.

In one of our late excursions into the country, happening to discourse upon the provision that was made for the poor in England, he seemed amazed how any of his countrymen could be so foolishly weak as to relieve occasional objects of charity, when the laws had made such ample provision for their support. In every parish house, says he, the poor are supplied with food, clothes, fire, and a bed to lie on ; they want no more, I desire no more myself ; yet still they seem discontented. I'm surprised at the inactivity of our magistrates, in not taking up such vagrants who are only a weight upon the industrious ; I'm surprised that the people are found to relieve them, when they must be at the same time sensible that it, in some measure, encourages idleness, extravagance, and imposture. Were I to advise any man for whom I had the least regard, I would caution him by all means not to be imposed upon by their false pretences : let me assure you, Sir, they are impostors, every one of them ; and rather merit a prison than relief.

He was proceeding in this strain earnestly, to dissuade me from an imprudence of which I am seldom guilty : when an old man who still had about him the remnants of tattered finery, implored our compassion. He assured us that he was no common beggar, but forced into the shameful profession, to support a dying wife and five hungry children. Being prepossessed against such falsehoods, his story had not the least influence upon me ; but it was quite otherwise with the man in black ; I could see it visibly operate upon his countenance, and effectually interrupt his harangue. I could easily perceive that his heart burned to relieve the five starving children, but he seemed ashamed to discover

his weakness to me. While he thus hesitated between compassion and pride, I pretended to look another way, and he seized this opportunity of giving the poor petitioner a piece of silver, bidding him at the same time, in order that I should  
5 not hear, go work for his bread, and not tease passengers with such impertinent falsehoods for the future.

As he had fancied himself quite unperceived, he continued, as we proceeded, to rail against beggars with as much animosity as before ; he threw in some episodes on his own  
10 amazing prudence and economy, with his profound skill in discovering impostors ; he explained the manner in which he would deal with beggars, were he a magistrate, hinted at enlarging some of the prisons for their reception, and told two stories of ladies that were robbed by beggarmen. He  
15 was beginning a third to the same purpose, when a sailor with a wooden leg once more crossed our walks, desiring our pity, and blessing our limbs. I was for going on without taking any notice, but my friend looking wishfully upon the poor petitioner, bid me stop, and he would shew me with  
20 how much ease he could at any time detect an impostor.

He now therefore assumed a look of importance, and in an angry tone began to examine the sailor, demanding in what engagement he was thus disabled and rendered unfit for service. The sailor replied in a tone as angrily as he, that  
25 he had been an officer on board a private ship of war, and that he had lost his leg abroad in defence of those who did nothing at home. At this reply, all my friend's importance vanished in a moment ; he had not a single question more to ask ; he now only studied what method he should take  
30 to relieve him unobserved. He had however no easy part to act, as he was obliged to preserve the appearance of ill-nature before me, and yet relieve himself by relieving the sailor. Casting therefore a furious look upon some bundles

of chips which the fellow carried in a string at his back, my friend demanded how he sold his matches ; but not waiting for a reply, desired, in a surly tone, to have a shilling's worth. The sailor seemed at first surprised at his demand, but soon recollected himself, and presenting his 5 whole bundle, Here, master, says he, take all my cargo, and a blessing into the bargain.

It is impossible to describe with what an air of triumph my friend marched off with his new purchase, he assured me that he was firmly of opinion that those fellows must 10 have stolen their goods, who could thus afford to sell them for half value ; he informed me of several different uses to which those chips might be applied ; he expatiated largely upon the savings that would result from lighting candles with a match instead of thrusting them into the fire. He 15 averred, that he would as soon have parted with a tooth as his money to those vagabonds, unless for some valuable consideration. I cannot tell how long this panegyric upon frugality and matches might have continued, had not his attention been called off by another object more distressful 20 than either of the former. A woman in rags, with one child in her arms, and another on her back, was attempting to sing ballads, but with such a mournful voice that it was difficult to determine whether she was singing or crying. A wretch, who, in the deepest distress still aimed at good 25 humour, was an object my friend was by no means capable of withstanding : his vivacity, and his discourse were instantly interrupted ; upon this occasion his very dissimulation had forsaken him. Even, in my presence, he immediately applied his hands to his pockets, in order to relieve 30 her ; but guess his confusion, when he found he had already given away all the money he carried about him to former objects. The misery painted in the woman's

visage, was not half so strongly expressed as the agony in his. He continued to search for some time, but to no purpose, till, at length, recollecting himself, with a face of ineffable good-nature, as he had no money, he put into her 5 hands his shilling's worth of matches.

## XIV

Letter XXVII.—*To the same.*

As there appeared something reluctantly good in the character of my companion, I must own it surprised me what could be 10 his motives for thus concealing virtues which others take such pains to display. I was unable to repress my desire of knowing the history of a man who thus seemed to act under continual restraint, and whose benevolence was rather the effect of appetite than reason.

15 It was not however till after repeated solicitations he thought proper to gratify my curiosity. 'If you are fond, says he, of hearing *hair breadth 'scapes*, my history must certainly please ; for I have been for twenty years upon the very verge of starving, without ever being starved.

20 'My father, the younger son of a good family, was possessed of a small living in the church. His education was above his fortune, and his generosity greater than his education. Poor as he was, he had his flatterers still poorer than himself ; for every dinner he gave them, they returned him an equi- 25 valent in praise ; and this was all he wanted ; the same ambition that actuates a monarch at the head of an army, influenced my father at the head of his table ; he told the story of the ivy tree, and that was laughed at ; he repeated the jest of the two scholars and one pair of breeches, and the 30 company laughed at that ; but the story of Taffy in the sedan chair was sure to set the table in a roar ; thus his



pleasure encreased in proportion to the pleasure he gave ; he loved all the world, and he fancied all the world loved him.

' As his fortune was but small, he lived up to the very extent of it ; he had no intentions of leaving his children money, for that was dross ; he was resolved they should have learn- 5 ing ; for learning, he used to observe, was better than silver or gold. For this purpose he undertook to instruct us himself ; and took as much pains to form our morals, as to improve our understanding. We were told that universal benevolence was what first cemented society ; we were taught to consider 10 all the wants of mankind as our own ; to regard the *human divine* with affection and esteem ; he wound us up to be mere machines of pity, and rendered us incapable of withstanding the slightest impulse made either by real or fictitious distress ; in a word, we were perfectly instructed in the art 15 of *giving away* thousands, before we were taught the more necessary qualifications of *getting* a farthing.

' I cannot avoid imagining, that thus refined by his lessons out of all my suspicion, and divested of even all the little cunning which Nature had given me, I resembled, upon my 20 first entrance into the busy and insidious world, one of those gladiators who were exposed without armour in the amphitheatre at Rome. My father, however, who had only seen the world on one side, seemed to triumph in my superior discernment ; though my whole stock of wisdom consisted in 25 being able to talk like himself upon subjects that once were useful, because they were then topics of the busy world ; but that now were utterly useless, because connected with the busy world no longer.

' The first opportunity he had of finding his expectations 30 disappointed, was at the very middling figure I made in the university ; he had flattered himself that he would soon see me rising into the foremost rank in literary reputation, but

was mortified to find me utterly unnoticed and unknown. His disappointment might have been partly ascribed to his having over-rated my talents, and partly to my dislike of mathematical reasoning at a time, when my imagination and memory, yet unsatisfied, were more eager after new objects than desirous of reasoning upon those I knew. This did not, however, please my tutors, who observed indeed, that I was a little dull ; but at the same time allowed, that I seemed to be very *good-natured*, and had no harm in me.

10 ' After I had resided at college seven years, my father died, and left me—his blessing. Thus shoved from shore without ill-nature to protect, or cunning to guide, or proper stores to subsist me in so dangerous a voyage, I was obliged to embark in the wide world at twenty-two. But, in order to settle in  
15 life, my friends *advised* (for they always advise when they begin to despise us) they advised me, I say, to go into orders.

' To be obliged to wear a long wig, when I liked a short one, or a black coat, when I generally dressed in brown, I thought was such a restraint upon my liberty, that I absolute-  
20 ly rejected the proposal. • A priest in England is not the same mortified creature with a bonze in China ; with us, not he that fasts best, but eats best, is reckoned the best liver ; yet I rejected a life of luxury, indolence, and ease, from no other consideration but that boyish one of dress. So that  
25 my friends were now perfectly satisfied I was undone ; and yet they thought it a pity for one who had not the least harm in him, and was so very good-natured.

' Poverty naturally begets dependence, and I was admitted as flatterer to a great man. At first I was surprised, that the  
30 situation of a flatterer at a great man's table could be thought disagreeable ; there was no great trouble in listening attentively when his lordship spoke, and laughing when he looked round for applause. This even good-manners might have

obliged me to perform. I found, however, too soon that his lordship was a greater dunce than myself ; and from that very moment flattery was at an end. I now rather aimed at setting him right, than at receiving his absurdities with submission : to flatter those we do not know is an easy task ; but to flatter 5 our intimate acquaintances, all whose foibles are strongly in our eye, is drudgery insupportable. Every time I now opened my lips in praise, my falsehood went to my conscience ; his lordship soon perceived me to be very unfit for service ; I was therefore discharged : my patron at the same time being 10 graciously pleased to observe, that he believed I was tolerably good-natured, and had not the least harm in me.

‘ Disappointed in ambition I had recourse to love. A young lady, who lived with her aunt, and was possessed of a pretty fortune in her own disposal, had given me, as I fancied, some 15 reason to expect success. The symptoms by which I was guided were striking ; she had always laughed with me at her awkward acquaintance, and at her aunt among the number ; she always observed, that a man of sense would make a better husband than a fool, and I as constantly applied the observ- 20 ation in my own favour. She continually talked in my company of friendship and the beauties of the mind, and spoke of Mr. Shrimp, my rival’s high-heel’d shoes with detestation. These were circumstances which I thought strongly in my favour ; so after resolving, and re-resolving, I had courage 25 enough to tell her my mind. Miss heard my proposal with serenity, seeming at the same time to study the figures of her fan. Out at last it came. There was but one small objection to complete our happiness, which was no more than—that she was married three months before to Mr. Shrimp, with high- 30 heel’d shoes ! By way of consolation however she observed, that tho’ I was disappointed in her, my addresses to her aunt would probably kindle her into sensibility ; as the old lady

always allowed me to be very good-natured, and not to have the least share of harm in me.

‘ Yet still I had friends, numerous friends, and to them I was resolved to apply. O friendship ! thou fond soother of the  
5 human breast, to thee we fly in every calamity ; to thee the wretched seek for succour ; on thee the care-tired son of misery fondly relies ; from thy kind assistance the unfortunate always hopes relief, and may be ever sure of—disappointment ! My first application was to a city scrivener, who had frequently  
10 offered to lend me money when he knew I did not want it. I informed him, that now was the time to put his friendship to the test ; that I wanted to borrow a couple of hundreds for a certain occasion, and was resolved to take it up from him. And pray, Sir, cried my friend, do you want all this money ?  
15 Indeed I never wanted it more, returned I. I am sorry for that, cries the scrivener, with all my heart ; for they who want money when they come to borrow, will always want money when they should come to pay.

‘ From him I flew with indignation to one of the best friends  
20 I had in the world, and made the same request. Indeed, Mr. Dry-bone, cries my friend, I always thought it would come to this. You know, Sir, I would not advise you but for your own good ; but your conduct has hitherto been ridiculous in the highest degree, and some of your acquaintance always thought  
25 you a very silly fellow ; let me see, you want two hundred pounds ; do you only want two hundred, Sir, exactly ? To confess a truth, returned I, I shall want three hundred ; but then I have another friend from whom I can borrow the rest. Why then, replied my friend, if you would take my advice ;  
30 and you know I should not presume to advise you but for your own good ; I would recommend it to you to borrow the whole sum from that other friend ; and then one note will serve for all, you know,



‘Poverty now began to come fast upon me, yet instead of growing more provident or cautious as I grew poor, I became every day more indolent and simple. A friend was arrested for fifty pounds, I was unable to extricate him except by becoming his bail. When at liberty he fled from his creditors, 5 and left me to take his place. In prison I expected greater satisfactions than I had enjoyed at large. I hoped to converse with men in this new world, simple and believing like myself, but I found them as cunning and as cautious as those in the world I had left behind. They spunged up my money 10 whilst it lasted, borrowed my coals and never paid them, and cheated me when I played at cribbage. All this was done because they believed me to be very good-natured and knew that I had no harm in me.

‘Upon my first entrance into this mansion, which is to some 15 the abode of despair, I felt no sensations different from those I experienced abroad. I was now on one side the door, and those who were unconfined were on the other ; this was all the difference between us. At first indeed I felt some uneasiness, in considering how I should be able to provide this week for 20 the wants of the week ensuing ; but after some time, if I found myself sure of eating one day, I never troubled my head how I was to be supplied another. I seized every precarious meal with the utmost good humour, indulged no rants of spleen at my situation, never called down heaven and all 25 the stars to behold me dining upon an halfpennyworth of radishes : my very companions were taught to believe that I liked salad better than mutton. I contented myself with thinking, that all my life I should either eat white bread or brown ; considered that all that happened was best, laughed 30 when I was not in pain, took the world as it went, and read Tacitus often, for want of more books and company.

‘How long I might have continued in this torpid state of

simplicity I cannot tell, had I not been roused by seeing an old acquaintance, whom I knew to be a prudent blockhead, preferred to a place in the government. I now found that I had pursued a wrong track, and that the true way of being  
5 able to relieve others, was first to aim at independence myself. My immediate care, therefore, was to leave my present habitation, and make an entire reformation in my conduct and behaviour. For a free, open, undesigning deportment, I put on that of closeness, prudence and economy. One of the most  
10 heroic actions I ever performed, and for which I shall praise myself as long as I live, was the refusing half a crown to an old acquaintance, at the time when he wanted it, and I had it to spare ; for this alone I deserve to be decreed an ovation.

‘ I now therefore pursued a course of uninterrupted frugal-  
15 ity, seldom wanted a dinner, and was consequently invited to twenty. I soon began to get the character of a saving hunk that had money ; and insensibly grew into esteem. Neighbours have asked my advice in the disposal of their daughters, and I have always taken care not to give any. I have contract-  
20 ed a friendship with an alderman, only by observing, that if we take a farthing from a thousand pound, it will be a thousand pound no longer. I have been invited to a pawnbroker’s table, by pretending to hate gravy ; and am now actually upon treaty of marriage with a rich widow, for only  
25 having observed that the bread was rising. If ever I am asked a question, whether I know it or not, instead of answering, I only smile and look wise. If a charity is proposed, I go about with the hat, but put nothing in myself. If a wretch solicits my pity, I observe that the world is filled with im-  
30 postors, and take a certain method of not being deceived by never relieving. In short, I now find the truest way of finding esteem even from the indigent, is *to give away nothing, and thus have much in our power to give.*’

## XV

Letter XXIX.—*From the same.*

WERE we to estimate the learning of the English by the number of books that are every day published among them, perhaps no country, not even China itself, could equal them in this particular. I have reckoned not less than twenty-three new books published in one day ; which upon computation, makes eight thousand three hundred and ninety-five in one year. Most of these are not confined to one single science, but embrace the whole circle. History, politics, poetry, mathematics, metaphysics, and the philosophy of Nature are all comprized in a manual not larger than that in which our children are taught the letters. If then we suppose the learned of England to read but an eighth part of the works which daily come from the press (and sure none can pretend to learning upon less easy terms) at this rate every scholar will read a thousand books in one year. From such a calculation you may conjecture what an amazing fund of literature a man must be possessed of, who thus reads three new books every day, not one of which but contains all the good things that ever were said or written. 5 10 15 20

And yet I know not how it happens, but the English are not in reality so learned as would seem from this calculation. We meet but few who know all arts and sciences to perfection ; whether it is that the generality are incapable of such extensive knowledge, or that the authors of those books are not adequate instructors. In China, the emperor himself takes cognisance of all the doctors in the kingdom who profess authorship. In England, every man may be an author that can write ; for they have by law a liberty not only of saying what they please, but of being as dull as they please. 25 30

Yesterday I testified my surprise to the man in black, where writers could be found in sufficient number to throw off the books I daily saw crowding from the press. I at first imagined that their learned seminaries might take this method of instructing the world. But to obviate this objection, my companion assured me, that the doctors of colleges never wrote, and that some of them had actually forgot their reading ; but if you desire, continued he, to see a collection of authors, I fancy I can introduce you this evening to a club, which assembles every Saturday at seven, at the sign of the Broom near Islington, to talk over the business of the last, and the entertainment of the week ensuing. I accepted his invitation, we walked together, and entered the house some time before the usual hour for the company assembling.

My friend took this opportunity of letting me into the characters of the principal members of the club, not even the host excepted, who, it seems, was once an author himself, but preferred by a bookseller to this situation as a reward for his former services.

The first person, said he, of our society, is doctor Nonentity, a metaphysician. Most people think him a profound scholar ; but as he seldom speaks, I cannot be positive in that particular ; he generally spreads himself before the fire, sucks his pipe, talks little, drinks much, and is reckoned very good company. I'm told he writes indexes to perfection, he makes essays on the origin of evil, philosophical enquiries upon any subject, and draws up an answer to any book upon twenty-four hours warning. You may distinguish him from the rest of the company by his long grey wig, and the blue handkerchief round his neck.

The next to him in merit and esteem is Tim Syllabub, a droll creature ; he sometimes shines as a star of the first



magnitude among the choice spirits of the age ; he is reckoned equally excellent at a rebus, a riddle, a bawdy song, and an hymn for the tabernacle. You will know him by his shabby finery, his powdered wig, dirty shirt, and broken silk stockings.

5

After him succeeds Mr. Tibs, a very *useful hand* ; he writes receipts for the bite of a mad dog, and throws off an eastern tale to perfection ; he understands the *business* of an author as well as any man ; for no bookseller alive can cheat him ; you may distinguish him by the peculiar clumsiness of his figure and the coarseness of his coat : however, though it be coarse, (as he frequently tells the company,) he has paid for it.

Lawyer Squint is the politician of the society ; he makes speeches for parliament, writes addresses to his fellow subjects, and letters to noble commanders ; he gives the history of every new play, and finds *seasonable thoughts* upon every occasion.—My companion was proceeding in his description, when the host came running in with terror on his countenance to tell us, that the door was beset with bailiffs. If that be the case then, says my companion, we had as good be going ; for I am positive we shall not see one of the company this night. Wherefore disappointed, we were both obliged to return home, he to enjoy the oddities which compose his character alone, and I to write as usual to my friend the occurrences of the day. Adieu.

## XVI

Letter XXX.—*From the same.*

By my last advices from Moscow, I find the caravan has not yet departed from China : I still continue to write, expecting that you may receive a large number of my letters at once.

30

In them you will find rather a minute detail of English peculiarities, than a general picture of their manners or disposition. Happy it were for mankind if all travellers would thus, instead of characterising a people in general terms, lead us into a detail of those minute circumstances which first influenced their opinion : the genius of a country should be investigated with a kind of experimental enquiry : by this means we should have more precise and just notions of foreign nations, and detect travellers themselves when they happened to form wrong conclusions.

My friend and I repeated our visit to the club of authors ; where, upon our entrance, we found the members all assembled and engaged in a loud debate.

The poet, in shabby finery, holding a manuscript in his hand, was earnestly endeavouring to persuade the company to hear him read the first book of an heroic poem, which he had composed the day before. But against this, all the members very warmly objected. They knew no reason why any member of the club should be indulged with a particular hearing, when many of them had published whole volumes which had never been looked in. They insisted that the law should be observed, where reading in company was expressly noticed. It was in vain that the plaintiff pleaded the peculiar merit of his piece ; he spoke to an assembly insensible to all his remonstrances ; the book of laws was opened, and read by the secretary, where it was expressly enacted, ' That whatsoever poet, speechmaker, critic, or historian, should presume to engage the company by reading his own works, he was to lay down six-pence previous to opening the manuscript, and should be charged one shilling an hour while he continued reading ; the said shilling to be equally distributed among the company as a recompence for their trouble.'

Our poet seemed at first to shrink at the penalty, hesitating for some time whether he should deposit the fine, or shut up the poem ; but looking round, and perceiving two strangers in the room, his love of fame out-weighed his prudence, and laying down the sum by law established, he insisted on his 5 prerogative.

A profound silence ensuing, he began by explaining his design. 'Gentlemen, says he, the present piece is not one of your common epic poems, which come from the press like paper kites in summer ; there are none of your Turnuses or 10 Dido's in it ; it is an heroical description of Nature. I only beg you 'll endeavour to make your souls unison with mine, and hear with the same enthusiasm with which I have written. The poem begins with the description of an author's bed-chamber : the picture was sketched in my own apartment ; 15 for you must know, gentlemen, that I am myself the hero. Then putting himself into the attitude of an orator, with all the emphasis of voice and action, he proceeded :

Where the Red Lion flaring o'er the way,  
Invited each passing stranger that can pay ; 20  
Where Calvert's butt, and Parson's black champaign,  
Regale the drabs and bloods of Drury lane ;  
There in a lonely room, from bailiffs snug,  
The muse found Scroggen stretch'd beneath a rug.  
A window patch'd with paper lent a ray, 25  
That dimly shew'd the state in which he lay ;  
The sanded floor that grits beneath the tread ;  
The humid wall with paltry pictures spread :  
The royal game of goose was there in view,  
And the twelve rules the royal martyr drew ; 30  
The seasons fram'd with listing found a place.  
And brave prince William shew'd his lamp-black face :  
The morn was cold, he views with keen desire  
The rusty grate unconscious of a fire ;  
With beer and milk arrears the frieze was scor'd

And five crack'd tea cups dress'd the chimney board,  
 A night cap deck'd his brows instead of bay,  
 A cap by night—a stocking all the day !'

With this last line he seemed to much elated, that he was  
 5 unable to proceed : ' There, gentlemen, cries he, there is a  
 description for you ; Rabelais's bed-chamber is but a fool  
 to it :

*A cap by night—a stocking all the day !*

There is sound and sense, and truth, and nature in the trifling  
 10 compass of ten little syllables.'

He was too much employed in self-admiration to observe  
 the company ; who by nods, winks, shrugs, and stifled laugh-  
 ter, testified every mark of contempt. He turned severally to  
 each for their opinion, and found all however ready to ap-  
 15 plaud. One swore it was inimitable ; another said it was  
 damn'd fine ; and a third cried out in a rapture Carissimo.  
 At last addressing himself to the president, And pray, Mr.  
 Squint, says he, let us have your opinion. ' Mine, answered  
 the president (taking the manuscript out of the author's  
 20 hands), may this glass suffocate me, but I think it equal to  
 any thing I have seen ; and I fancy (continued he, doub-  
 ling up the poem and forcing it into the author's pocket) that  
 you will get great honour when it comes out ; so I shall  
 beg leave to put it in. We will not intrude upon your good-  
 25 nature, in desiring to hear more of it at present ; *ex ungue*  
*Herculem*, we are satisfied, perfectly satisfied.' The author  
 made two or three attempts to pull it out a second time,  
 and the president made as many to prevent him. Thus though  
 with reluctance he was at last obliged to sit down, contented  
 30 with the commendations for which he had paid.

When this tempest of poetry and praise was blown over, one  
 of the company changed the subject, by wondering how any



man can be so dull as to write poetry at present, since prose itself would hardly pay. Would you think it, gentlemen, continued he, I have actually written last week sixteen prayers, twelve bawdy jests, and three sermons, all at the rate of sixpence a-piece ; and what is still more extraordinary, the bookseller 5 has lost by the bargain. Such sermons would once have gained me a prebend's stall ; but now, alas, we have neither piety, taste, nor humour among us. Positively if this season does not turn out better than it has begun, unless the ministry commit some blunders to furnish us with a new topic of 10 abuse, I shall resume my old business of working at the press, instead of finding it employment.

The whole club seemed to join in condemning the season, as one of the worst that had come for some time ; a gentleman particularly observed that the nobility were never known 15 to subscribe worse than at present. 'I know not how it happens, said he, though I follow them up as close as possible, yet I can hardly get a single subscription in a week. The houses of the great are as inaccessible as a frontier garrison at midnight. I never see a nobleman's door half 20 opened that some surly porter or footman does not stand full in the breach. I was yesterday to wait with a subscription proposal upon my lord Squash, the Creolian. I had posted myself at his door the whole morning, and just as he was getting into his coach, thrust my proposal snug into 25 his hand folded up in the form of a letter from myself. He just glanced at the superscription, and, not knowing the hand, consigned it to his valet de chambre ; this respectable personage treated it as his master, and put it into the hands of the porter. The porter grasped my proposal frowning ; 30 and, measuring my figure from top to toe, put it back into my own hands unopened.

'To the devil I pitch all the nobility, cries a little man,

in a peculiar accent, I am sure they have of late used me most scurvily. You must know, gentlemen, some time ago, upon the arrival of a certain noble duke from his travels, I set myself down, and vamped up a fine flaunting, poetical  
5 panegyric, which I had written in such a strain that I fancied it would have even wheedled milk from a mouse. In this I represented the whole kingdom welcoming his grace to his native soil, not forgetting the loss France and Italy would sustain in their arts by his departure. I expected to  
10 touch for a bank bill at least ; so folding up my verses in gilt paper, I gave my last half crown to a genteel servant to be the bearer. My letter was safely conveyed to his grace, and the servant after four hours' absence, during which time I led the life of a fiend, returned with a letter four times  
15 as big as mine. Guess my extasy at the prospect of so fine a return. I eagerly took the paquet into my hands, that trembled to receive it. I kept it some time unopened before me, brooding over the expected treasure it contained ; when, opening it, as I hope to be saved, gentlemen, his grace  
20 had sent me in payment for my poem no bank bills, but six copies of verse, each longer than mine, addressed to him upon the same occasion.'

' A nobleman, cries a member, who had hitherto been silent, is created as much for the confusion of us authors as the  
25 catchpole. I'll tell you a story, gentlemen, which is as true as that this pipe is made of clay. When I was delivered of my first book, I owed my tailor for a suit of clothes, but that is nothing new, you know, and may be any man's case as well as mine. Well, owing him for a suit of clothes, and  
30 hearing that my book took very well, he sent for his money, and insisted upon being paid immediately : though I was at that time rich in fame, for my book run like wild-fire, yet I was very short in money, and being unable to satisfy

his demand, prudently resolved to keep my chamber, preferring a prison of my own choosing at home, to one of my tailor's choosing abroad. In vain the bailiffs used all their arts to decoy me from my citadel, in vain they sent to let me know that a gentleman wanted to speak with me at the next tavern, in vain they came with an urgent message from my aunt in the country ; in vain I was told that a particular friend was at the point of death, and desired to take his last farewell ; I was deaf, insensible, rock, adamant : the bailiffs could make no impression on my hard heart, for I effectually kept my liberty by never stirring out of the room. 5 10

' This was very well for a fortnight ; when one morning I received a most splendid message from the earl of Doomsday, importing that he had read my book, and was in raptures with every line of it ; he impatiently longed to see the author, and had some designs which might turn out greatly to my advantage. I paused upon the contents of this message, and found there could be no deceit, for the card was gilt at the edges, and the bearer, I was told, had quite the look of a gentleman. Witness, ye powers, how my heart triumph- ed at my own importance ; I saw a long perspective of felicity before me, I applauded the taste of the times, which never saw genius forsaken ; I had prepared a set introductory speech for the occasion, five glaring compliments for his lordship, and two more modest for myself. The next morning, therefore, in order to be punctual to my appointment, I took coach, and ordered the fellow to drive to the street and house mentioned in his lordship's address. I had the precaution to pull up the windows as I went along to keep off the busy parts of mankind, and, big with expectation, fancied the coach never went fast enough. At length, however, the wished-for moment of its stopping arrived : this for some time I impatiently expected, and letting down the door in a 15 20 25 30

transport, in order to take a previous view of his lordship's magnificent palace and situation, I found poison to my sight ! I found myself, not in an elegant street, but a paltry lane, not at a nobleman's door, but the door of a spunging-house ;  
 5 I found the coachman had all this while been just driving me to jail, and I saw the bailiff with a devil's face, coming out to secure me'.

To a philosopher, no circumstance, however trifling, is too minute ; he finds instruction and entertainment in occurrences,  
 10 which are passed over by the rest of mankind as low, trite, and indifferent ; it is from the number of these particulars, which, to many, appear insignificant, that he is at last enabled to form general conclusions ; this, therefore, must be my excuse for sending so far as China accounts of manners  
 15 and follies, which, though minute in their own nature, serve more truly to characterise this people than histories of their public treaties, courts, ministers, negotiations, and ambassadors. Adieu.

## XVII

20 Letter XXXIII.—*From the same.*

I AM disgusted, O Fum Hoam, even to sickness disgusted. Is it possible to bear the presumption of those islanders, when they pretend to instruct me in the ceremonies of China ! They lay it down as a maxim, that every person who comes from  
 25 thence must express himself in metaphor ; swear by Alla, rail against wine, and behave, and talk and write like a Turk or Persian. They make no distinction between our elegant manners, and the voluptuous barbarities of our eastern neighbours. Wherever I come, I raise either diffidence or asto-  
 30 nishment ; some fancy me no Chinese, because I am formed more like a man than a monster ; and others wonder to find



one born five thousand miles from England endued with common sense. Strange, say they, that a man who has received his education at such a distance from London, should have common sense : to be born out of England, and yet have common sense ! impossible ! He must be some Englishman in disguise ; his very visage has nothing of the true exotic barbarity. 5

I yesterday received an invitation from a lady of distinction, who it seems had collected all her knowledge of eastern manners from fictions every day propagated here, under the titles of eastern tales, and oriental histories : she received me very politely, but seemed to wonder that I neglected bringing opium and a tobacco box ; when chairs were drawn for the rest of the company, I was assigned my place on a cushion on the floor. It was in vain that I protested the Chinese used chairs as in Europe ; she understood decorums too well to entertain me with the ordinary civilities. 15

I had scarce been seated according to her directions, when the footman was ordered to pin a napkin under my chin ; this I protested against, as being no way Chinese ; however, the whole company, who it seems were a club of connoisseurs, gave it unanimously against me, and the napkin was pinned accordingly. 20

It was impossible to be angry with people, who seemed to err only from an excess of politeness, and I sat contented, expecting their importunities were now at an end ; but as soon as ever dinner was served, the lady demanded whether I was for a plate of *Bear's claws*, or a slice of *Bird's nests* ? As these were dishes with which I was utterly unacquainted, I was desirous of eating only what I knew, and therefore begged to be helped from a piece of beef that lay on the side table : my request at once disconcerted the whole company. A Chinese eat beef ! that could never be ! there was no local 30

propriety in Chinese beef, whatever there might be in Chinese pheasant. Sir, said my entertainer, I think I have some reason to fancy myself a judge of these matters : in short, the Chinese never eat beef ; so that I must be permitted to re-  
5 commend the Pilaw : there was never better dressed at Peking; the saffron and rice well boiled, and the spices in perfection.

I had no sooner began to eat what was laid before me, than I found the whole company as much astonished as before ; it seems I made no use of my chop-sticks. A grave gentleman,  
10 whom I take to be an author, harangued very learnedly (as the company seemed to think) upon the use which was made of them in China : he entered into a long argument with himself about their first introduction, without once appealing to me, who might be supposed best capable of silencing the en-  
15 quiry. As the gentleman therefore took my silence for a mark of his own superior sagacity, he was resolved to pursue the triumph : he talked of our cities, mountains and animals, as familiarly as if he had been born in Quamsi, but as erroneously as if a native of the moon ; he attempted to prove  
20 that I had nothing of the true Chinese cut in my visage ; shewed that my cheek bones should have been higher, and my forehead broader ; in short, he almost reasoned me out of my country, and effectually persuaded the rest of the company to be of his opinion.

25 I was going to expose his mistakes, when it was insisted that I had nothing of the true eastern manner in my delivery. This gentleman's conversation (says one of the ladies, who was a great reader) is like our own, mere chit chat and common sense ; there is nothing like sense in the true eastern  
30 style, where nothing more is required but sublimity. Oh, for an history of Aboulfaouris, the grand voyager, of genii, magicians, rocks, bags of bullets, giants, and enchanters, where all is great, obscure, magnificent, and unintelligible ! I have

written many a sheet of eastern tale myself, interrupts the author, and I defy the severest critic to say but that I have stuck close to the true manner. I have compared a lady's chin to the snow upon the mountains of Bomek ; a soldier's sword, to the clouds that obscure the face of heaven. If 5 riches are mentioned, I compare them to the flocks that graze the verdant Tefflis ; if poverty, to the mists that veil the brow of mount Baku. I have used *thee* and *thou* upon all occasions, I have described fallen stars, and splitting mountains, not forgetting the little Houries who make a pretty figure in 10 every description. But you shall hear how I generally begin. 'Eben-ben-bolo, who was the son of Ban, was born on the foggy summits of Benderabassi. His beard was whiter than the feathers which veil the breast of the Penguin ; his eyes were like the eyes of doves, when washed by the dews of the 15 morning ; his hair, which hung like the willow weeping over the glassy stream, was so beautiful that it seemed to reflect its own brightness ; and his feet were as the feet of a wild deer which fleeth to the tops of the mountains.' There, there, is the true eastern taste for you ; every advance made towards 20 sense is only a deviation from sound. Eastern tales should always be sonorous, lofty, musical, and unmeaning.

I could not avoid smiling to hear a native of England attempt to instruct me in the true eastern idiom, and after he looked round some time for applause, I presumed to ask him 25 whether he had ever travelled into the east ; to which he replied in the negative ; I demanded whether he understood Chinese or Arabic, to which also he answered as before. Then how, Sir, said I, can you pretend to determine upon the eastern style, who are entirely unacquainted with the eastern 30 writings ? Take, Sir, the word of one who is *professedly* a Chinese, and who is *actually* acquainted with the Arabian writers, that what is palmed upon you daily for an imita-

tion of eastern writing, no ways resembles their manner, either in sentiment or diction. In the east, similes are seldom used, and metaphors almost wholly unknown ; but in China particularly, the very reverse of what you allude to, takes place ;  
 5 a cool phlegmatic method of writing prevails there. The writers of that country, ever more assiduous to instruct than to please, address rather the judgment than the fancy. Unlike many authors of Europe, who have no consideration of the reader's time, they generally leave more to be understood  
 10 than they express.

Besides, Sir, you must not expect from an inhabitant of China the same ignorance, the same unlettered simplicity, that you find in a Turk, Persian, or native of Peru. The Chinese are versed in the sciences as well as you, and are  
 15 masters of several arts unknown to the people of Europe. Many of them are instructed not only in their own national learning, but are perfectly well acquainted with the languages and learning of the west. If my word, in such a case, is not to be taken, consult your own travellers on this head,  
 20 who affirm, that the scholars of Pekin and Siam sustain theological theses in Latin. *The college of Masprend, which is but a league from Siam* (says one of your travellers<sup>1</sup>) *came in a body to salute our ambassador. Nothing gave me more sincere pleasure than to behold a number of priests venerable*  
 25 *both from age and modesty, followed by a number of youths of all nations, Chinese, Japanese, Tonquinese, of Cochin China, Pegu and Siam, all willing to pay their respects in the most polite manner imaginable. A Cochin Chinese made an excellent Latin oration upon this occasion : he was suc-*  
 30 *ceeded, and even out-done, by a student of Tonquin, who was as well skilled in the western learning as any scholar of Paris.*

<sup>1</sup> Journal ou suite du Voyage de Siam en forme de Lettres familières fait en 1685, et 1686, par N. L. D. C., p. 174, edit. Amstelod. 1686.



Now, Sir, if youths who never stirred from home, are so perfectly skilled in your laws and learning, surely more must be expected from one like me, who have travelled so many thousand miles, who have conversed familiarly for several years with the English factors established at Canton, and the missionaries sent us from every part of Europe. The unaffected of every country nearly resemble each other, and a page of our Confucius and of your Tillotson have scarce any material difference. Paltry affectation, strained allusions, and disgusting finery, are easily attained by those who choose to wear them; and they are but too frequently the badges of ignorance, or of stupidity whenever it would endeavour to please.

I was proceeding in my discourse, when, looking round, I perceived the company no way attentive to what I attempted, with so much earnestness, to enforce. One lady was whispering her that sat next, another was studying the merits of a fan, a third began to yawn, and the author himself fell fast asleep: I thought it, therefore, high time to make a retreat, nor did the company seem to shew any regret at my preparations for departure; even the lady who had invited me, with the most mortifying insensibility, saw me seize my hat and rise from my cushion; nor was I invited to repeat my visit, because it was found that I aimed at appearing rather a reasonable creature, than an outlandish idiot. Adieu.

## XVIII

Letter XXXV.—*From Hingpo, a slave in Persia, to Altangi, a travelling philosopher of China, by the way of Moscow.*

FORTUNE has made me the slave of another, but nature and inclination render me entirely subservient to you; a tyrant

commands my body, but you are master of my heart. And yet let not thy inflexible nature condemn me when I confess that I find my soul shrink with my circumstances. I feel my mind, not less than my body, bend beneath the rigours of  
5 servitude ; the master whom I serve grows every day more formidable. In spite of reason which should teach me to despise him, his hideous image fills even my dreams with horror.

A few days ago, a Christian slave, who wrought in the gardens, happening to enter an arbour where the tyrant was entertaining the ladies of his Haram with coffee, the unhappy captive was instantly stabbed to the heart for his intrusion. I have been preferred to his place, which tho' less laborious  
15 me nearer him whose presence excites sensations at once of disgust and apprehension.

Into what a state of misery are the modern Persians fallen ! A nation famous for setting the world an example of freedom is now become a land of tyrants, and a den of slaves. The  
20 houseless Tartar of Kamkatska, who enjoys his herbs and his fish in unmolested freedom, may be envied, if compared to the thousands who pine here in hopeless servitude, and curse the day that gave them being. Is this just dealing, Heaven ! to render millions wretched to swell up the happiness of a  
25 few ; cannot the powerful of this earth be happy without our sighs and tears ; must every luxury of the great be woven from the calamities of the poor ! It must, it must surely be, that this jarring discordant life is but the prelude to some future harmony ; the soul, attuned to virtue here, shall go  
30 from hence to fill up the universal choir where Tien presides in person, where there shall be no tyrants to frown, no shackles to bind, nor no whips to threaten, where I shall once more meet my father with rapture, and give a loose to filial

piety, where I shall hang on his neck, and hear the wisdom of his lips, and thank him for all the happiness to which he has introduced me.

The wretch whom fortune has made my master, has lately purchased several slaves of both sexes ; among the rest I hear 5 a Christian captive talked of with admiration. The eunuch who bought her, and who is accustomed to survey beauty with indifference, speaks of her with emotion ! Her pride, however, astonishes her attendant slaves not less than her beauty ; it is reported that she refuses the warmest sollicita- 10 tions of her haughty lord ; he has even offered to make her one of his four wives upon changing her religion, and conforming to his. It is probable she cannot refuse such extraordinary offers, and her delay is perhaps intended to enhance her favours.

15

I have just now seen her : she inadvertently approached the place without a veil, where I sat writing. She seemed to regard the heavens alone with fixed attention ; there her most ardent gaze was directed. Genius of the sun ! what unexpected softness ! what animated grace ! her beauty seemed 20 the transparent covering of virtue. Celestial beings could not wear a look of more perfection while sorrow humanised her form, and mixed my admiration with pity. I rose from the bank on which I sat, and she retired ; happy that none observed us, for such an interview might have been fatal. 25

I have regarded, till now, the opulence and the power of my tyrant, without envy ; I saw him with a mind incapable of enjoying the gifts of fortune, and consequently regarded him as one loaded, rather than enriched with its favours. But at present, when I think that so much beauty is reserved 30 only for him, that so many charms shall be lavished on a wretch incapable of feeling the greatness of the blessing, I

own I feel a reluctance to which I have hitherto been a stranger.

But let not my father impute those uneasy sensations to so trifling a cause as love. No, never let it be thought that  
5 *your* son, and the pupil of the wise Fum Hoam, could stoop to so degrading a passion. I am only displeased at seeing so much excellence so unjustly disposed of.

The uneasiness which I feel is not for myself, but for the beautiful Christian. When I reflect on the barbarity of him  
10 for whom she is designed, I pity, indeed I pity her. When I think that she must only share one heart, who deserves to command a thousand, excuse me, if I feel an emotion, which universal benevolence extorts from me. As I am convinced, that you take a pleasure in those sallies of humanity, and are  
15 particularly pleased with compassion, I could not avoid discovering the sensibility with which I felt this beautiful stranger's distress. I have for a while forgot in hers, the miseries of my own hopeless situation. The tyrant grows every day more severe, and love which softens all other minds into ten-  
20 derness, seems only to have encreased his severity. Adieu.

## XIX

Letter XXXVI.—*To the same.*

THE whole Haram is filled with a tumultuous joy ; Zelis, the beautiful captive, has consented to embrace the religion of  
25 Mahomet, and become one of the wives of the fastidious Persian. It is impossible to describe the transport that sits on every face on this occasion. Music and feasting fill every apartment, the most miserable slave seems to forget his chains, and sympathizes with the happiness of Mostadad. The herb  
30 we tread beneath our feet is not made more for our use,



than every slave around him for their imperious master ; mere machines of obedience, they wait with silent assiduity, feel his pains, and rejoice in his exultation. Heavens ! how much is requisite to make one man happy !

Twelve of the most beautiful slaves, and I among the 5 number, have got orders to prepare for carrying him in triumph to the bridal apartment. The blaze of perfumed torches are to imitate the day ; the dancers and singers are hired at a vast expence. The nuptials are to be celebrated on the approaching feast of Barboura, when an hundred taels in 10 gold are to be distributed among the barren wives, in order to pray for fertility from the approaching union.

What will not riches procure ! an hundred domestics, who curse the tyrant in their souls, are commanded to wear a face of joy, and they are joyful. An hundred flatterers are order- 15 ed to attend, and they fill his ears with praise. Beauty, all-commanding beauty, sues for admittance, and scarcely receives an answer ; even love itself seems to wait upon fortune, or though the passion be only feigned, yet it wears every appearance of sincerity ; and what greater pleasure can even 20 true sincerity confer, or what would the rich have more ?

Nothing can exceed the intended magnificence of the bridegroom, but the costly dresses of the bride ; six eunuchs in the most sumptuous habits are to conduct him to the nuptial couch, and wait his orders. Six ladies, in all the magnificence 25 of Persia, are directed to undress the bride. Their business is to assist to encourage her, to divest her of every encumbering part of her dress, all but the last covering, which, by an artful complication of ribbons, is purposely made difficult to unloose, and with which she is to part reluctantly even to 30 the joyful possessor of her beauty.

Mostadad, O my father, is no philosopher ; and yet he seems perfectly contented with ignorance. Possessed of num-

berless slaves, camels, and women, he desires no greater possession. He never opened the page of Mencius, and yet all the slaves tell me that he is happy.

Forgive the weakness of my nature, if I sometimes feel my heart rebellious to the dictates of wisdom, and eager for happiness like his. Yet why wish for his wealth with his ignorance ; to be like him, incapable of sentimental pleasures, incapable of feeling the happiness of making others happy, incapable of teaching the beautiful Zelis philosophy ?

10 What, shall I in a transport of passion give up the golden mean, the universal harmony, the unchanging essence for the possession of an hundred camels ; as many slaves, thirty-five beautiful horses, and seventy-three fine women : first blast me to the centre ! Degrade me beneath the most degraded ! Pare  
15 my nails, ye powers of heaven ! ere I would stoop to such an exchange. What, part with philosophy, which teaches me to suppress my passions instead of gratifying them, which teaches me even to divest my soul of passion, which teaches serenity in the midst of tortures ; philosophy, by which even  
20 now I am so very serene, and so very much at ease, to be persuaded to part with it for any other enjoyment ! Never, never, even though persuasion spoke in the accents of Zelis !

A female slave informs me that the bride is to be arrayed in a tissue of silver, and her hair adorned with the largest  
25 pearls of Ormus ; but why tease you with particulars, in which we both are so little concerned ? The pain I feel in separation throws a gloom over my mind, which in this scene of universal joy I fear may be attributed to some other cause ; how wretched are those who are like me, denied even the last  
30 resource of misery, their tears. Adieu.

## XX

Letter XLI.—*From Lien Chi Altangi to \* \* \*, Merchant in Amsterdam.*

SOME time since I sent thee, oh holy disciple of Confucius, an account of the grand abbey or mausoleum of the kings 5 and heroes of this nation. I have since been introduced to a temple not so ancient, but far superior in beauty and magnificence. In this, which is the most considerable of the empire, there are no pompous inscriptions, no flattery paid the dead, but all is elegant and awfully simple. There are however a 10 few rags hung round the walls, which have at a vast expense been taken from the enemy in the present war. The silk of which they are composed, when new, might be valued at half a string of copper money in China ; yet this wise people fitted out a fleet and an army in order to seize them ; 15 though now grown old, and scarce capable of being patched up into a handkerchief. By this conquest, the English are said to have gained, and the French to have lost, much honour. Is the honour of European nations placed only in tattered silk ? 20

In this temple I was permitted to remain during the whole service ; and were you not already acquainted with the religion of the English, you might, from my description, be inclined to believe them as grossly idolatrous as the disciples of Lao. The idol which they seem to address, strides like a 25 colossus over the door of the inner temple, which here, as with the Jews, is esteemed the most sacred part of the building. Its oracles are delivered in an hundred various tones, which seem to inspire the worshippers with enthusiasm and awe : an old woman who appeared to be the priestess, was 30 employed in various attitudes, as she felt the inspiration. When it began to speak, all the people remained fixed in

silent attention, nodding assent, looking approbation, appearing highly edified by those sounds, which to a stranger might seem inarticulate and unmeaning.

When the idol had done speaking, and the priestess had  
5 locked up its lungs with a key, observing almost all the company leaving the temple, I concluded the service was over, and taking my hat, was going to walk away with the crowd, when I was stopt by the man in black, who assured me that the ceremony had scarcely yet begun ! What, cried I, do I  
10 not see almost the whole body of the worshippers leaving the church ? Would you persuade me that such numbers who profess religion and morality would in this shameless manner quit the temple before the service was concluded ? you surely mistake ; not even the Kalmouks would be guilty of such  
15 an indecency, though all the object of their worship was but a joint stool. My friend seemed to blush for his countrymen, assuring me that those whom I saw running away, were only a parcel of musical blockades, whose passion was merely for sounds, and whose heads were as empty as a  
20 fiddle case ; those who remain behind, says he, are the true Religious ; they make use of music to warm their hearts, and to lift them to a proper pitch of rapture ; examine their behaviour, and you will confess there are some among us who practise true devotion.

25 I now looked round me as he directed, but saw nothing of that fervent devotion which he had promised ; one of the worshippers appeared to be ogling the company through a glass ; another was fervent not in addresses to heaven, but to his mistress ; a third whispered, a fourth took snuff, and  
30 the priest himself, in a drowsy tone, read over the *duties* of the day.

Bless my eyes, cried I, as I happened to look towards the door, what do I see ; one of the worshippers fallen fast



asleep, and actually sunk down on his cushion : is he now enjoying the benefit of a trance, or does he receive the influence of some mysterious vision ! *Alas, alas*, replied my companion, *no such thing ; he has only had the misfortune of eating too hearty a dinner, and finds it impossible to keep* 5 *his eyes open.* Turning to another part of the temple, I perceived a young lady just in the same circumstances and attitude ; Strange, cried I, can she too have over-eaten herself ? *O fie*, replied my friend, *you now grow censorious. She grow drowsy from eating too much ! that would be pro-* 10 *fanation ! She only sleeps now from having sat up all night at a brag party.* Turn me where I will then, says I, I can perceive no single symptom of devotion among the worshippers, except from that old woman in the corner, who sits groaning behind the long sticks of a mourning fan ; she in- 15 deed seems greatly edified with what she hears. *Aye*, replied my friend, *I knew we should find some to catch you ; I know her ; that is the deaf lady who lives in the cloysters.*

In short, the remissness of behaviour in almost all the worshippers, and some even of the guardians, struck me with 20 surprise : I had been taught to believe that none were ever promoted to offices in the temple, but men remarkable for their superior sanctity, learning, and rectitude ; that there was no such thing heard of as persons being introduced into the church merely to oblige a senator, or provide for the 25 younger branch of a noble family : I expected, as their minds were continually set upon heavenly things, to see their eyes directed there also, and hoped from their behaviour to perceive their inclinations corresponding with their duty. But I am since informed, that some are appointed to preside 30 over temples they never visit ; and, while they receive all the money, are contented with letting others do all the good. Adieu.

## XXI

Letter LIV.—*From Lien Chi Altangi, to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking, in China.*

THOUGH naturally pensive, yet I am fond of gay company, and take every opportunity of thus dismissing the mind from duty. From this motive I am often found in the centre of a crowd ; and wherever pleasure is to be sold, am always a purchaser. In those places, without being remarked by any, I join in whatever goes forward, work my passions into a similitude of frivolous earnestness, shout as they shout, and condemn as they happen to disapprove. A mind thus sunk for a while below its natural standard, is qualified for stronger flights, as those first retire who would spring forward with greater vigour.

Attracted by the serenity of the evening, my friend and I lately went to gaze upon the company in one of the public walks near the city. Here we sauntered together for some time, either praising the beauty of such as were handsome, or the dresses of such as had nothing else to recommend them. We had gone thus deliberately forward for some time, when stopping on a sudden, my friend caught me by the elbow, and led me out of the public walk ; I could perceive by the quickness of his pace, and by his frequently looking behind, that he was attempting to avoid somebody who followed ; we now turned to the right, then to the left ; as we went forward he still went faster, but in vain ; the person whom he attempted to escape, hunted us through every doubling, and gained upon us each moment ; so that at last we fairly stood still, resolving to face what we could not avoid.

Our pursuer soon came up, and joined us with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance. *My dear Drybone*, cries he, shaking my friend's hand, *where have you been hiding*

*this half a century? Positively I had fancied you were gone down to cultivate matrimony and your estate in the country. During the reply, I had an opportunity of surveying the appearance of our new companion; his hat was pinched up with peculiar smartness; his looks were pale, 5 thin, and sharp; round his neck he wore a broad black ribbon, and in his bosom a buckle studded with glass; his coat was trimmed with tarnished twist; he wore by his side a sword with a black hilt, and his stockings of silk, though newly washed, were grown yellow by long service. 10 I was so much engaged with the peculiarity of his dress, that I attended only to the latter part of my friend's reply, in which he complimented Mr. Tibbs on the taste of his clothes, and the bloom in his countenance. Psha, psha, Will, cried the figure, no more of that if you love me, you know 15 I hate flattery, on my soul I do; and yet, to be sure, an intimacy with the great will improve one's appearance, and a course of venison will fatten; and yet faith I despise the great as much as you do; but there are a great many damn'd honest fellows among them; and we must not quarrel with 20 one half, because the other wants weeding. If they were all such as my lord Mudler, one of the most good-natured creatures that ever squeezed a lemon, I should myself be among the number of their admirers. I was yesterday to dine at the Duchess of Piccadilly's, my lord was there. Ned, 25 says he to me, Ned, says he, I'll hold gold to silver I can tell where you were poaching last night. Poaching, my lord, says I; faith you have missed already; for I staid at home, and let the girls poach for me. That's my way; I take a fine woman as some animals do their prey; stand still, and swoop, 30 they fall into my mouth.*

Ah, Tibbs, thou art an happy fellow, cried my companion with looks of infinite pity, I hope your fortune is as much

improved as your understanding in such company? *Improved*, replied the other; *You shall know,—but let it go no further,—a great secret—five hundred a year to begin with.—My lord's word of honour for it—His lordship took*  
 5 *me down in his own chariot yesterday, and we had a tête-à-tête dinner in the country; where we talked of nothing else. I fancy you forget, sir, cried I, you told us but this moment of your dining yesterday in town! Did I say so,*  
*replied he coolly, to be sure if I said so, it was so—Dined*  
 10 *in town: egad now I do remember, I did dine in town; but I dined in the country too; for you must know, my boys, I eat two dinners. By the bye, I am grown as nice as the Devil in my eating. I'll tell you a pleasant affair about that: We were a select party of us to dine at Lady Grogam's, an*  
 15 *affected piece, but let it go no further; a secret: well, there happened to be no assafætida in the sauce to a turkey, upon which says I, I'll hold a thousand guineas, and say done first, that—But dear Drybone, you are an honest creature, lend me half-a-crown for a minute or two, or so, just till—*  
 20 *But hearkee, ask me for it the next time we meet, or it may be twenty to one but I forget to pay you.*

When he left us, our conversation naturally turned upon so extraordinary a character. His very dress, cried my friend, is not less extraordinary than his conduct. If you  
 25 meet him this day you find him in rags, if the next in embroidery. With those persons of distinction, of whom he talks so familiarly, he has scarce a coffee-house acquaintance. However, both for interests of society, and perhaps for his own, heaven has made him poor, and while all the world  
 30 perceive his wants, he fancies them concealed from every eye. An agreeable companion because he understands flattery, and all must be pleased with the first part of his conversation, though all are sure of its ending with a demand



on their purse. While his youth countenances the levity of his conduct, he may thus earn a precarious subsistence, but when age comes on, the gravity of which is incompatible with buffoonery, then will he find himself forsaken by all ; condemned in the decline of life to hang upon some rich 5 family whom he once despised, there to undergo all the ingenuity of studied contempt, to be employed only as a spy upon the servants, or a bugbear to fight the children into obedience. Adieu.

## XXII

10

Letter LV.—*To the same.*

I AM apt to fancy I have contracted a new acquaintance whom it will be no easy matter to shake off. My little beau yesterday overtook me again in one of the public walks, and slapping me on the shoulder, saluted me with an air of the 15 most perfect familiarity. His dress was the same as usual, except that he had more powder in his hair, wore a dirtier shirt, a pair of temple spectacles, and his hat under his arm.

As I knew him to be an harmless amusing little thing, I could not return his smiles with any degree of severity ; so 20 we walked forward on terms of the utmost intimacy, and in a few minutes discussed all the usual topics preliminary to particular conversation.

The oddities that marked his character, however, soon began to appear ; he bowed to several well dressed persons, 25 who, by their manner of returning the compliment, appeared perfect strangers. At intervals he drew out a pocket book, seeming to take memorandums before all the company, with much importance and assiduity. In this manner he led me through the length of the whole walk, fretting at his absur- 30

ditities, and fancying myself laughed at not less than him by every spectator.

When we were got to the end of our procession, *Blast me*, cries he, with an air of vivacity, *I never saw the park so thin in my life before ; there's no company at all to-day. Not a single face to be seen.* No company, interrupted I peevishly ; no company where there is such a crowd ; why man, there's too much. What are the thousands that have been laughing at us but company ! *Lard, my dear*, returned he, with the utmost good humour, *you seem immensely chagrined ; but blast me, when the world laughs at me, I laugh at all the world, and so we are even. My lord Trip, Bill Squash the Creolian, and I, sometimes make a party at being ridiculous ; and so we say and do a thousand things for the joke sake...* But I see you are grave, and if you are for a fine grave sentimental companion, you shall dine with me and my wife to day, I must insist on't ; I'll introduce you to Mrs. Tibbs, a Lady of as elegant qualifications as any in Nature ; she was bred, but that's between ourselves, under the inspection of the Countess of All-night. A charming body of voice, but no more of that, she will give us a song. You shall see my little girl too, Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Tibbs, a sweet pretty creature ; I design her for my Lord Drumstick's eldest son, but that's in friendship, let it go no further ; she's but six years old, and yet she walks a minute, and plays on the guitar immensely already. I intend she shall be as perfect as possible in every accomplishment. In the first place I'll make her a scholar ; I'll teach her Greek myself, and learn that language purposely to instruct her ; but let that be a secret.

Thus saying, without waiting for a reply, he took me by the arm and hauled me along. We passed through many dark alleys and winding ways ; for, from some motives to

me unknown, he seemed to have a particular aversion to every frequented street ; at last, however, we got to the door of a dismal looking house in the outlets of the town, where he informed me he chose to reside for the benefit of the air.

We entered the lower door, which ever seemed to lie most hospitably open ; and I began to ascend an old and creaking stair-case, when, as he mounted to shew me the way, he demanded, whether I delighted in prospects, to which answering in the affirmative, *Then, says he, I shall shew you one of the most charming in the world out of my windows ; we shall see the ships sailing, and the whole country for twenty miles round, tip top, quite high. My Lord Swamp would give ten thousand guineas for such a one ; but as I sometimes pleasantly tell him, I always love to keep my prospects at home, that my friends may see me the oftener.*

By this time we were arrived as high as the stairs would permit us to ascend, till we came to what he was facetiously pleased to call the first floor down the chimney ; and knocking at the door, a voice from within demanded, Who's there ? My conductor answered, that it was him. But this not satisfying the querist, the voice again repeated the demand : to which he answered louder than before ; and now the door was opened by an old woman with cautious reluctance.

When we were got in, he welcomed me to his house with great ceremony, and turning to the old woman, asked where was her lady ? ' Good troth, replied she, in a peculiar dialect, she's washing your two shirts at the next door, because they have taken an oath against lending out the tub any longer.' *My two shirts,* cries he in a tone that faltered with confusion, *what does the idiot mean !* ' I ken what I mean well enough, replied the other, she's washing your twa shirts at the next door, because——' *Fire and fury, no more of thy stupid explanations,* cried he,—*Go and inform her we have got com-*

*pany. Were that Scotch hag to be for ever in the family, she would never learn politeness, nor forget that absurd poisonous accent of hers, or testify the smallest specimen of breeding or high life; and yet it is very surprising too, 5 as I had her from a parliament man, a friend of mine, from the highlands, one of the politest men in the world; but that's a secret.*

We waited some time for Mrs. Tibbs' arrival, during which interval I had a full opportunity of surveying the 10 chamber and all its furniture; which consisted of four chairs with old wrought bottoms, that he assured me were his wife's embroidery; a square table that had been once japanned, a cradle, in one corner, a lumbering cabinet in the other; a broken shepherdess, and a mandarine without a 15 head, were stuck over the chimney; and round the wall several paltry, unframed pictures, which he observed, were all his own drawing: *What do you think, Sir, of that head in a corner, done in the manner of Grisoni? there's the true keeping in it; it's my own face, and though there happens to be no 20 likeness, a countess offered me an hundred for its fellow: I refused her, for, hang it, that would be mechanical, you know.*

The wife at last made her appearance, at once a slattern and coquet; much emaciated, but still carrying the re- 25 mains of beauty. She made twenty apologies for being seen in such odious dishabille, but hoped to be excused, as she had staid out all night at the gardens with the countess, who was excessively fond of the *horns*. 'And, indeed, my dear, added she, turning to her husband, his lordship drank your 30 health in a bumper.' *Poor Jack, cries he, a dear good-natured creature, I know he loves me; but I hope, my dear, you have given orders for dinner; you need make no great preparations neither, there are but three of us, something*



*elegant, and little will do ; a turbot, an ortolan, or a——. Or what do you think my dear, interrupts the wife, of a nice, pretty bit of ox cheek, piping hot, and dressed with a little of my own sauce—The very thing, replies he, it will eat best with some smart bottled beer ; but be sure to let's have 5 the sauce his grace was so fond of. I hate your immense loads of meat : that is country all over ; extreme disgusting to those who are in the least acquainted with high life.*

By this time my curiosity began to abate, and my appetite to increase ; the company of fools may at first make us 10 smile, but at last never fails of rendering us melancholy. I therefore pretended to recollect a prior engagement, and after having shewn my respects to the house, according to the fashion of the English, by giving the old servant a piece of money at the door, I took my leave ; Mr. Tibbs assuring 15 me that dinner, if I staid, would be ready at least in less than two hours.

### XXIII

Letter LVII.—*From Lien Chi Altangi, to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking, in 20 China.*

I HAVE frequently admired the manner of criticising in China, where the learned are assembled in a body to judge of every new publication ; to examine the merits of the work without knowing the circumstances of the author, and then 25 to usher it into the world with proper marks of respect or reprobation.

In England there are no such tribunals erected ; but if a man thinks proper to be a judge of genius, few will be at the pains to contradict his pretensions. If any choose to be 30 critics, it is but saying they are critics ; and from that time

forward they become invested with full power and authority over every caitiff who aims at their instruction or entertainment.

As almost every member of society has by this means a  
5 vote in literary transactions, it is no way surprising to find the rich leading the way here as in other common concerns of life, to see them earlier bribing the numerous herd of voters by their interest, or brow-beating them by their authority.

A great man says, at his table, that such a book is *no bad*  
10 *thing*. Immediately the praise is carried off by five flatterers to be dispersed at twelve different coffee-houses, from whence it circulates, still improving as it proceeds, through forty-five houses, where cheaper liquors are sold ; from thence it is carried away by the honest tradesman to his own fire-side,  
15 where the applause is eagerly caught up by his wife and children who have been long taught to regard his judgment as the standard of perfection. Thus when we have traced a wide extended literary reputation up to its original source, we shall find it derived from some great man, who has, perhaps,  
20 received all his education and English from a tutor of Berne, or a dancing-master of Picardy.

The English are a people of good sense ; and I am the more surprised to find them swayed in their opinions, by men who often from their very education are incompetent judges. Men  
25 who, being always bred in affluence, see the world only on one side, are surely improper judges of human nature ; they may indeed describe a ceremony, a pageant or a ball ; but how can they pretend to dive into the secrets of the human heart, who have been nursed up only in forms, and daily behold  
30 nothing but the same insipid adulation smiling upon every face. Few of them have been bred in that best of schools, the school of adversity ; and by what I can learn, fewer still have been bred in any school at all,

From such a description one would think, that a droning duke, or a dowager duchess, was not possessed of more just pretensions to taste than persons of less quality ; and yet whatever the one or the other may write or praise, shall pass for perfection, without farther examination. A nobleman .5 has but to take a pen, ink, and paper, write away through three large volumes, and then sign his name to the title page, though the whole might have been before more disgusting than his own rent-roll, yet signing his name and title gives value to the deed ; title being alone equivalent to taste, ima- 10 gination, and genius.

As soon as a piece therefore is published, the first questions are, Who is the author ? Does he keep a coach ? Where lies his estate ? What sort of a table does he keep ? If he happens to be poor and unqualified for such a scrutiny, he 15 and his works sink into irremediable obscurity ; and too late he finds, that having fed upon turtle is a more ready way to fame than having digested Tully.

The poor devil, against whom fashion has set its face, vainly alleges, that he has been bred in every part of Europe 20 where knowledge was to be sold ; that he has grown pale in the study of Nature and himself ; his works may please upon the perusal, but the pretensions to fame are entirely disregarded ; he is treated like a fiddler, whose music, though liked, is not much praised, because he lives by it ; while a gentleman per- 25 former, though the most wretched scraper alive, throws the audience into raptures. The fiddler indeed may in such a case console himself by thinking, that while the other goes off with all the praise, he runs away with all the money : but here the parallel drops ; for while the nobleman triumphs 30 in unmerited applause, the author by profession, steals off with—*Nothing*.

The poor, therefore, here, who draw their pens auxiliary

to the laws of their country, must think themselves very happy if they find, not fame but forgiveness ; and yet they are hardly treated ; for as every country grows more polite, the press becomes more useful ; and writers become more necessary, as readers are supposed to increase. In a polished society, that man, though in rags, who has the power of enforcing virtue from the press, is of more real use than forty stupid brachmans or bonzes, or guebres, though they preached never so often, never so loud, or never so long. That man, though in rags, who is capable of deceiving even indolence into wisdom, and who professes amusement while he aims at reformation, is more useful in refined society than twenty cardinals with all their scarlet, and tricked out in all the fopperies of scholastic finery.

15

## XXIV

Letter LVIII.—*To the same.*

As the man in black takes every opportunity of introducing me to such company as may serve to indulge my speculative temper, or gratify my curiosity, I was by his influence lately invited to a *visitation* dinner. To understand this term, you must know, that it was formerly the custom here for the principal priests to go about the country once a year, and examine upon the spot whether those of subordinate orders did their duty, or were qualified for the task ; whether their temples were kept in proper repair, or the laity pleased with their administration.

Though a visitation of this nature was very useful, yet it was found to be extremely troublesome, and for many reasons utterly inconvenient ; for as the principal priests were obliged to attend at court, in order to solicit preferment, it was impossible they could at the same time attend in the



country, which was quite out of the road to promotion : if we add to this the gout, which has been time immemorial a clerical disorder here, together with the bad wine, and ill dressed provisions that must infallibly be served up by the way, it was not strange that the custom has been long discontinued. At present, therefore, every head of the church, instead of going about to visit his priests, is satisfied if his priests come in a body once a year to visit him ; by this means the duty of half a year is despatched in a day. When assembled, he asks each in his turn how they have behaved, and are liked ; upon which, those who have neglected their duty, or are disagreeable to their congregation, no doubt accuse themselves, and tell him all their faults ; for which, he reprimands them most severely. 5 10

The thoughts of being introduced into a company of philosophers and learned men (for such I conceived them) gave me no small pleasure ; I expected our entertainment would resemble those sentimental banquets so finely described by Xenophon and Plato ; I was hoping some Socrates would be brought in from the door, in order to harangue upon divine love ; but as for eating and drinking I had prepared myself to be disappointed in that particular. I was apprised, that fasting and temperance were tenets strongly recommended to the professors of Christianity ; and I had seen the frugality and mortification of the priests of the east ; so that I expected an entertainment where we should have much reasoning, and little meat. 15 20 25

Upon being introduced, I confess I found no great signs of mortification in the faces or persons of the company. However, I imputed their florid looks to temperance, and their corpulency to a sedentary way of living. I saw several preparations indeed for dinner, but none for philosophy. The company seemed to gaze upon the table with silent expecta- 30

tion ; but this I easily excused. Men of wisdom, thought I, are ever slow of speech ; they deliver nothing unadvisedly. *Silence*, says Confucius, *is a friend that will never betray*. They are now probably inventing maxims, or hard sayings, for  
5 their mutual instruction, when some one shall think proper to begin.

My curiosity was now wrought up to the highest pitch, I impatiently looked round to see if any were going to interrupt the mighty pause ; when, at last, one of the company  
10 declared, that there was a sow in his neighbourhood that farrowed fifteen pigs at a litter. This I thought a very preposterous beginning : but just as another was going to second the remark, dinner was served, which interrupted the conversation for that time.

15 The appearance of dinner, which consisted of a variety of dishes, seemed to diffuse new cheerfulness upon every face ; so that I now expected the philosophical conversation to begin, as they improved in good humour. The principal priest, however, opened his mouth, with only observing, that  
20 the venison had not been kept enough, though he had given strict orders for having it killed ten days before. *I fear*, continued he, *it will be found to want the true healthy flavour ; you will find nothing of the original wildness in it*. A priest, who sat next him, having smelt it and wiped his  
25 nose : ' Ah, my good lord, cries he, you are too modest, it is perfectly fine ; everybody knows that no body understands keeping venison with your lordship.' ' Ay, and partridges, too interrupted another ; I never find them right anywhere else.' His lordship was going to reply, when a third took  
30 off the attention of the company, by recommending the pig as inimitable. ' I fancy, my lord, continues he, it has been smothered in its own blood.' ' If it has been smothered in its blood, cried a facetious member, helping himself, we'll

now smother it in egg sauce.' This poignant piece of humour produced a long loud laugh, which the facetious brother observing, and now that he was in luck, willing to second his blow, assured the company he would tell them a good story about that : ' As good a story, cries he, bursting into 5 a violent fit of laughter himself, as ever you heard in your lives ; there was a farmer of my parish, who used to sup upon wild ducks and flummery ; so this farmer—*Doctor Marrowfat*, cries his lordship, interrupting him, *give me leave to drink your health*—so being fond of wild ducks 10 and flummery—*Doctor*, adds a gentleman who sate next him, *let me advise to a wing of this turkey* ;—so this farmer being fond—*Hob, nob, Doctor, which do you choose, white or red ?*—So being fond of wild ducks and flummery—*Take care of your hand, Sir, it may dip in the gravy*. The doctor, now 15 looking round, found not a single eye disposed to listen ; wherefore calling for a glass of wine, he gulped down the disappointment and the tale in a bumper.

The conversation now began to be little more than a rhapsody of exclamations ; as each had pretty well satisfied his 20 own appetite, he now found sufficient time to press others. *Excellent, the very thing ; let me recommend the pig, do but taste the bacon ; never eat a better thing in my life ; exquisite, delicious*. This edifying discourse continued through three courses, which lasted as many hours, till every one of 25 the company were unable to swallow or utter any thing more.

It is very natural for men who are abridged in one excess, to break into some other. The clergy here, particularly those who are advanced in years, think if they are abstemious with regard to women and wine, they may indulge their other 30 appetites without censure. Thus some are found to rise in the morning only to a consultation with their cook about dinner, and when that has been swallowed, make no other

use of their faculties (if they have any) but to ruminate on the succeeding meal.

A debauch in wine is even more pardonable than this, since one glass insensibly leads on to another, and instead  
5 of sating whets the appetite. The progressive steps to it are cheerful and seducing; the grave are animated, the melancholy relieved, and there is even classic authority to countenance the excess. But in eating, after Nature is once satisfied, every additional morsel brings stupidity and dis-  
10 tempers with it, and as one of their own poets expresses it,

The soul subsides, and wickedly inclines,  
To seem but mortal, even in sound divines.

Let me suppose, after such a meal as this I have been describing, while all the company are sitting in lethargic  
15 silence round the table, grunting under a load of soup, pig, pork, and bacon; let me suppose, I say, some hungry beggar, with looks of want, peeping through one of the windows, and thus addressing the assembly, *Prythee, pluck those napkins from your chins; after Nature is satisfied all that you*  
20 *eat extraordinary is my property, and I claim it as mine. It was given you in order to relieve me, and not to oppress yourselves. How can they comfort or instruct others who can scarce feel their own existence, except from the unsavoury returns of an ill digested meal? But though neither you*  
25 *nor the cushions you sit upon will hear me, yet the world regards the excesses of its teachers with a prying eye, and notes their conduct with double severity.* I know no other answer any one of the company could make to such an expostulation, but this: 'Friend, you talk of our losing a  
30 character, and being disliked by the world; well, and supposing all this to be true, what then! who cares for the world? We'll preach for the world, and the world shall pay us for preaching, whether we like each other or not.'



## XXV

Letter LIX.—*From Hingpo to Lien Chi Altangi, by the way of Moscow.*

YOU will probably be pleased to see my letter dated from Terki, a city which lies beyond the bound of the Persian 5 empire ; here, blessed with security, with all that is dear, I double my raptures, by communicating them to you ; the mind sympathizing with the freedom of the body, my whole soul is dilated in gratitude, love, and praise.

Yet were my own happiness all that inspired my present 10 joy, my raptures might justly merit the imputation of self-interest ; but when I think that the beautiful Zelis is also free, forgive my triumph when I boast of having rescued from captivity the most deserving object upon earth.

You remember the reluctance she testified at being obliged 15 to marry the tyrant she hated. Her compliance at last was only feigned, in order to gain time to try some future means of escape. During the interval between her promise and the intended performance of it, she came undiscovered one evening to the place where I generally retired after the 20 fatigues of the day ; her appearance was like that of an aerial genius, when it descends to minister comfort to undeserved distress ; the mild lustre of her eye served to banish my timidity ; her accents were sweeter than the echo of some distant symphony. ‘Unhappy stranger,’ said she, 25 in the Persian language, ‘you here perceive one more wretched than thyself ; all this solemnity of preparation, this elegance of dress, and the number of my attendants, serve but to encrease my miseries ; if you have courage to rescue an unhappy woman from approaching ruin, and our detested 30 tyrant, you may depend upon my future gratitude.’ I bowed to the ground, and she left me, filled with rapture and asto-

nishment. Night brought me no rest, nor could the ensuing morning calm the anxieties of my mind. I projected a thousand methods for her delivery ; but each, when strictly examined, appeared impracticable ; in this uncertainty the  
5 evening again arrived, and I placed myself on my former station in hopes of a repeated visit. After some short expectation, the bright perfection again appeared ; I bowed, as before, to the ground ; when raising me up she observed that the time was not to be spent in useless ceremony ; she  
10 observed that the day following was appointed for the celebration of her nuptials, and that something was to be done that very night for our mutual deliverance. I offered with the utmost humility to pursue whatever scheme she should direct ; upon which she proposed that instant to scale the  
15 garden wall, adding, that she had prevailed upon a female slave, who was now waiting at the appointed place, to assist her with a ladder.

Pursuant to this information I led her trembling to the place appointed ; but instead of the slave we expected to see,  
20 Mostadad himself was there awaiting our arrival ; the wretch in whom we confided, it seems, had betrayed our design to her master, and he now saw the most convincing proofs of her information. He was just going to draw his sabre, when a principle of avarice repressed his fury, and he  
25 resolved, after a severe chastisement, to dispose of me to another master, in the mean time ordering me to be confined in the strictest manner, and the next day to receive an hundred blows on the soles of my feet.

When the morning came I was led out in order to receive  
30 the punishment, which, from the severity with which it is generally inflicted upon slaves, is worse even than death.

A trumpet was to be a signal for the solemnisation of the nuptials of Zelis, and for the infliction of my punishment.

Each ceremony to me equally dreadful were just going to begin, when we were informed that a large party of Circassian Tartars had invaded the town, and were laying all in ruin. Every person now thought only of saving himself ; I instantly unloosed the cords with which I was bound, and 5 seizing a scymetar from one of the slaves who had not courage to resist me, flew to the women's apartment where Zelis was confined, dressed out for the intended nuptials. I bade her follow me without delay ; and going forward, cut my way through the eunuchs, who made but a faint resistance. 10 The whole city was now a scene of conflagration and terror ; every person was willing to save himself, unmindful of others. In this confusion seizing upon two of the fleetest courses in the stables of Mostadad, we fled northward towards the kingdom of Circassia. As there were several 15 others flying in the same manner, we passed without notice, and in three days arrived at Terki, a city that lies in a valley within the bosom of the frowning mountains of Caucasus.

Here, free from every apprehension of danger, we enjoy all those satisfactions which are consistent with virtue ; though 20 I find my heart at intervals give way to unusual passions, yet such is my admiration for my fair companion, that I lose even tenderness in distant respect. Though her person demands particular regard even among the beauties of Circassia, yet is her mind far more lovely. How very different 25 is a woman who thus has cultivated her understanding, and been refined into delicacy of sentiment, from the daughter of the East, whose education is only formed to improve the person, and make them more tempting objects of prostitution !

Adieu. 30

## XXVI

Letter LXI.—*From Lien Chi Altangi to Hingpo.*

THE news of your freedom lifts the load of former anxiety from my mind ; I can now think of my son without regret, 5 applaud his resignation under calamities, and his conduct in extricating himself from it.

*You are now free, just let loose from the bondage of an hard master* : this is the crisis of your fate ; and as you now manage fortune, succeeding life will be marked with happiness or misery ; a few years' perseverance in prudence, which 10 at your age is but another name for virtue, will ensure comfort, pleasure, tranquillity, esteem ; too eager an enjoyment of every good that now offers will reverse the medal, and present you with poverty, anxiety, remorse, contempt.

15 As it has been observed that none are better qualified to give others advice, than those who have taken the least of it themselves ; so in this respect I find myself perfectly authorised to offer mine, even though I should waive my paternal authority upon this occasion.

20 The most usual way among young men who have no resolution of their own, is first to ask one friend's advice and follow it for some time ; then to ask advice of another, and turn to that ; so of a third, still unsteady, always changing. However, be assured that every change of this nature is for 25 the worse ; people may tell you of your being unfit for some peculiar occupations in life ; but heed them not ; whatever employment you follow with perseverance and assiduity will be found fit for you ; it will be your support in youth, and comfort in age. In learning the useful part of every profession, very moderate abilities will suffice ; even if the mind 30 be a little balanced with stupidity, it may in this case be useful. Great abilities have always been less serviceable to

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the possessors than moderate ones. Life has been compared to a race, but the allusion still improves, by observing that the most swift are ever the least manageable.

To know one profession only, is enough for one man to know ; and this (whatever the professors may tell you to the contrary) is soon learned. Be contented therefore with one good employment ; for if you understand two at a time, people will give you business in neither.

A conjurer and a tailor once happened to converse together. Alas, cries the tailor, what an unhappy poor creature am I ; if people should ever take it in their heads to live without clothes I am undone ; I have no other trade to have recourse to. Indeed, friend, I pity you sincerely, replies the conjurer ; but thank heaven, things are not quite so bad with me ; if one trick should fail, I have a hundred tricks more for them yet. However, if at any time you are reduced to beggary, apply to me and I will relieve you. A famine overspread the land ; the tailor made a shift to live, because his customers could not be without clothes ; but the poor conjurer, with all his hundred tricks, could find none that had money to throw away : it was in vain that he promised to eat fire, or to vomit pins ; no single creature would relieve him, till he was at last obliged to beg from the very tailor whose calling he had formerly despised.

There are no obstructions more fatal to fortune than pride and resentment. If you must resent injuries at all, at least suppress your indignation until you become rich, and then shew away ; the resentment of a poor man is like the efforts of a harmless insect to sting ; it may get him crushed, but cannot defend him. Who values that anger which is consumed only in empty menaces ?

Once upon a time a goose fed its young by a pond side ; and a goose in such circumstances is always extremely proud,

and excessively punctilious. If any other animal, without the least design to offend, happened to pass that way, the goose was immediately at him. The pond, she said, was hers, and she would maintain a right in it, and support her honour, while she had a bill to hiss, or a wing to flutter. In this manner she drove away ducks, pigs, and chickens ; nay, even the insidious cat was seen to scamper. A lounging mastiff, however, happened to pass by, and thought it no harm if he should lap a little of the water, as he was thirsty. 10 The guardian goose flew at him like a fury, pecked at him with her beak, and flapped him with her feathers. The dog grew angry, had twenty times a good mind to give her a sly snap ; but suppressing his indignation, because his master was nigh, *A pox take thee*, cries he, *for a fool ; sure those* 15 *who have neither strength nor weapons to fight, at least should be civil ; that fluttering and hissing of thine may one day get thine head snapt off, but it can neither injure thine enemies, or ever protect thee.* So saying, he went forward to the pond, quenched his thirst, in spite of the goose, and 20 followed his master.

Another obstruction to the fortune of youth is, that while they are willing to take offence from none, they are also equally desirous of giving none offence. From hence they endeavour to please all, comply with every request, attempt 25 to suit themselves to every company ; have no will of their own, but like wax catch every contiguous impression. By thus attempting to give universal satisfaction, they at last find themselves miserably disappointed ; to bring the generality of admirers on our side, it is sufficient to attempt pleasing a very few. 30

A painter of eminence was once resolved to finish a piece which should please the whole world. When, therefore, he had drawn a picture, in which his utmost skill was exhausted,

it was exposed in the public market-place, with directions at the bottom for every spectator to mark with a brush, which lay by, every limb, and feature, which seemed erroneous. The spectators came, and in general applauded ; but each, willing to show his talent at criticism, marked whatever he 5 thought proper. At evening, when the painter came, he was mortified to find the whole picture one universal blot ; not a single stroke that was not stigmatised with marks of disapprobation : not satisfied with this trial, the next day he was resolved to try them in a different manner, and exposing 10 his picture as before, desired that every spectator would mark those beauties he approved or admired. The people complied, and the artist returning, found his picture replete with the marks of beauty ; every stroke that had been yesterday condemned now received the character of approbation. Well, 15 cries the painter, *I now find that the best way to please one half of the world, is not to mind what the other half says ; since what are faults in the eyes of these, shall be by those regarded as beauties.* Adieu.

## XXVII

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Letter LXV.—*From Lien Chi Altangi, to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking, in China.*

THOUGH not very fond of seeing a pageant myself, yet I am generally pleased with being in the crowd which sees it ; it is amusing to observe the effect which such a spectacle has upon 25 the variety of faces, the pleasure it excites in some, the envy in others, and the wishes it raises in all. With this design I lately went to see the entry of a foreign ambassador, resolved to make one in the mob, to shut as they shouted, to fix with earnestness upon the same frivolous objects, and partici- 30 pate for a while the pleasures and the wishes of the vulgar.

Struggling here for some time, in order to be first to see the cavalcade as it passed, some one of the crowd unluckily happened to tread upon my shoe, and tore it in such a manner, that I was utterly unqualified to march forward with the main body, and obliged to fall back in the rear. Thus rendered incapable of being a spectator of the show myself, I was at least willing to observe the spectators, and limped behind like one of the invalids which follow the march of an army.

10 In this plight, as I was considering the eagerness that appeared on every face, how some bustled to get foremost, and others contented themselves with taking a transient peep when they could ; how some praised the four black servants, that were stuck behind one of the equipages, and some the  
15 ribbons that decorated the horses' necks in another ; my attention was called off to an object more extraordinary than any I had yet seen : a poor cobbler sat in his stall by the way side, and continued to work while the crowd passed by, without testifying the smallest share of curiosity. I own his  
20 want of attention excited mine ; and as I stood in need of his assistance, I thought it best to employ a philosophic cobbler on this occasion : perceiving my business, therefore, he desired me to enter and sit down, took my shoe in his lap, and began to mend it with his usual indifference and  
25 taciturnity.

' How, my friend, said I to him, can you continue to work while all those fine things are passing by your door ? ' ' Very fine they are, master, returned the cobbler, for those that like them, to be sure ; but what are all those fine things  
30 to me ? You don't know what it is to be a cobbler, and so much the better for yourself. Your bread is baked, you may go and see the sights the whole day, and eat a warm supper when you come home at night ; but for me, if I



should run hunting after all these fine folk, what should I get by my journey but an appetite, and, God help me, I have too much of that at home already, without stirring out for it. Your people who may eat four meals a day and a supper at night, are but a bad example to such a one as I. 5 No, master, as God has called me into this world in order to mend old shoes, I have no business with fine folk, and they no business with me.' I here interrupted him with a smile. 'See this last, master, continues he, and this hammer ; this last and hammer are the two best friends I have 10 in this world ; nobody else will be my friend, because I want a friend. The great folks you saw pass by just now have five hundred friends, because they have no occasion for them ; now, while I stick to my good friends here, I am very contented ; but when I ever so little run after sights and fine 15 things, I begin to hate my work, I grow sad, and have no heart to mend shoes any longer.'

This discourse only served to raise my curiosity to know more of a man whom Nature had thus formed into a philosopher. I therefore insensibly led him into an history of 20 his adventures : 'I have lived, said he, a wandering life, now five and fifty years, here to-day and gone to-morrow ; for it was my misfortune, when I was young, to be fond of changing.' *You have been a traveller then, I presume,* interrupted I. 'I can't boast much of travelling, continued 25 he, for I have never left the parish in which I was born but three times in my life, that I can remember ; but then there is not a street in the whole neighbourhood that I have not lived in, at some time or another. When I began to settle and to take to my business in one street, some unforeseen 30 misfortune, or a desire of trying my luck elsewhere, has removed me, perhaps a whole mile away from my former customers, while some more lucky cobbler would come into

my place, and make a handsome fortune among friends of my making : there was one who actually died in a stall that I had left, worth seven pounds seven shillings, all in hard gold, which he had quilted into the waistband of his 5 breeches.'

I could not but smile at these migrations of a man by the fire-side, and continued to ask if he had ever been married.

'Ay, that I have, master, replied he, for sixteen long years ; and a weary life I had of it, heaven knows. My wife took 10 it into her head, that the only way to thrive in this world was to save money, so though our comings-in was but about three shillings a week, all ever she could lay her hands upon, she used to hide away from me, though we were obliged to starve the whole week after for it.

15 'The first three years we used to quarrel about this every day, and I always got the better ; but she had a hard spirit, and still continued to hide as usual ; so that I was at last tired of quarrelling and getting the better, and she scraped and scraped at pleasure, till I was almost starved to death. 20 Her conduct drove me at last in despair to the ale-house ; here I used to sit with people who hated home like myself, drank while I had money left, and run in score when any body would trust me ; till at last the landlady, coming one day with a long bill when I was from home, and putting it 25 into my wife's hands, the length of it effectually broke her heart. I searched the whole stall after she was dead for money, but she had hidden it so effectually, that with all my pains I could never find a farthing.'

By this time my shoe was mended, and satisfying the 30 poor artist for his trouble, and rewarding him besides for his information, I took my leave, and returned home to lengthen out the amusement his conversation afforded, by communicating it to my friend. Adieu.

## XXVIII

Letter LXVII.—*From Lien Chi Altangi to Hinpo, by the way of Moscow.*

BOOKS, my son, while they teach us to respect the interests of others, often make us unmindful of our own ; while they instruct the youthful reader to grasp at social happiness, he grows miserable in detail, and attentive to universal harmony, often forgets that he himself has a part to sustain in the concert. I dislike therefore the philosopher who describes the inconveniences of life in such pleasing colours that the pupil grows enamoured of distress, longs to try the charms of poverty, meets it without dread, nor fears its inconveniences, till he severely feels them. 5 10

A youth, who has thus spent his life among books, new to the world, and unacquainted with man, but by philosophic information, may be considered as a being, whose mind is filled with the vulgar errors of the wise ; utterly unqualified for a journey through life, yet confident of his own skill in the direction, he sets out with confidence, blunders on with vanity, and finds himself at last undone. 15 20

He first has learned from books, and then lays it down as a maxim, that all mankind are virtuous or vicious in excess ; and he has been long taught to detest vice and love virtue : warm therefore in attachments, and steadfast in enmity, he treats every creature as a friend or foe ; expects from those he loves unerring integrity, and consigns his enemies to the reproach of wanting every virtue. On this principle he proceeds ; and here begin his disappointments : upon a closer inspection of human nature, he perceives, that he should have moderated his friendship, and softened his severity ; for he often finds the excellencies of one part of mankind clouded with vice, and the faults of the other brightened with virtue ; 25 30

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he finds no character so sanctified that has not its failings, none so infamous, but has somewhat to attract our esteem ; he beholds impiety in lawn, and fidelity in fetters.

He now therefore, but too late, perceives that his regard  
5 should have been more cool, and his hatred less violent ; that the truly wise seldom court romantic friendships with the good, and avoid, if possible, the resentment even of the wicked : every moment gives him fresh instances that the bonds of friendship are broken if drawn too closely, and that those  
10 whom he has treated with disrespect more than retaliate the injury : at length therefore he is obliged to confess, that he has declared war upon the vicious half of mankind, without being able to form an alliance among the virtuous to espouse his quarrel.

15 Our book-taught philosopher, however, is now too far advanced to recede ; and though poverty be the just consequence of the many enemies his conduct has created, yet he is resolved to meet it without shrinking : philosophers have described poverty in most charming colours ; and even his vanity  
20 is touched, in thinking, that he should shew the world, in himself one more example of patience, fortitude, and resignation. *Come, then, O Poverty ! for what is there in thee dreadful to the WISE ! Temperance, health, and frugality, walk in thy train ; cheerfulness and liberty are ever thy companions.* Shall any be ashamed of thee of whom Cincinnatus  
25 was not ashamed ? the running brook, the herbs of the field can amply satisfy nature ; man wants but little, nor that little long ; come, then, O Poverty, while kings stand by and gaze with admiration, at the true philosopher's resignation.

30 The goddess appears ; for Poverty ever comes at the call : but, alas ! he finds her by no means the charming figure, books and his warm imagination had painted. As when an eastern bride, whom her friends and relations had long described as a



model of perfection, pays her first visit, the longing bridegroom lifts the veil to see a face he had never seen before ; but instead of a countenance, blazing with beauty like the sun, he beholds deformity shooting icicles to his heart ; such appears Poverty to her new entertainer ; all the fabric of 5 enthusiasm is at once demolished, and a thousand miseries rise upon its ruins, while Contempt, with pointing finger, is foremost in the hideous procession.

The poor man now finds that he can get no king to look at him while he is eating ; he finds that in proportion as he 10 grows poor, the world turns its back upon him, and gives him leave to act the philosopher in all the majesty of solitude ; it might be agreeable enough to play the philosopher, while we are conscious that mankind are spectators ; but what signifies wearing the mask of sturdy contentment, and mounting the 15 stage of restraint, when not one creature will assist at the exhibition ! Thus is he forsaken of men, while his fortitude wants the satisfaction even of self-applause ; for either he does not feel his present calamities, and that is natural *insensibility*, or he disguises his feelings, and that is *dissimula-* 20 *tion*.

Spleen now begins to take up the man ; not distinguishing in his resentments, he regards all mankind with detestation, and commencing man-hater, seeks solitude to be at liberty to rail.

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It has been said, that he who retires to solitude is either a beast or an angel. The censure is too severe, and the praise unmerited ; the discontented being, who retires from society, is generally some good-natured man, who has begun life with- 30 out experience, and knew not how to gain it in his inter- course with mankind. Adieu.

## XXIX

Letter LXIX.—*From Lien Chi Altangi, to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy, at Peking in China.*

5 INDULGENT Nature seems to have exempted this island from many of those epidemic evils which are so fatal in other parts of the world. A want of rain but for a few days beyond the expected season in China, spreads famine, desolation, and terror, over the whole country ; the winds that blow from the  
10 brown bosom of the western desert are impregnated with death in every gale ; but in this fortunate land of Britain, the inhabitant courts health in every breeze, and the husbandman ever sows in joyful expectation.

But though the nation be exempt from real evils, think not,  
15 my friend, that it is more happy on this account than others. They are afflicted, it is true, with neither famine nor pestilence, but then there is a disorder peculiar to the country, which every season makes strange ravages among them ; it spreads with pestilential rapidity, and infects almost every  
20 rank of people ; what is still more strange, the natives have no name for this peculiar malady, though well known to foreign physicians by the appellation of *Epidemic terror*.

A season is never known to pass in which the people are not visited by this cruel calamity in one shape or another,  
25 seemingly different, though ever the same ; one year it issues from a baker's shop in the shape of a six-penny loaf, the next it takes the appearance of a comet with a fiery tail, a third it threatens like a flat-bottomed boat, and a fourth it carries consternation at the bite of a mad dog. The people,  
30 when once infected, lose their relish for happiness, saunter about with looks of despondence, ask after the calamities of the day, and receive no comfort but in heightening each

other's distress. It is insignificant how remote or near, how weak or powerful the object of terror may be, when once they resolve to fright and be frightened, the merest trifles sow consternation and dismay, each proportions his fears, not to the object, but to the dread he discovers in the countenance of others ; for when once the fermentation is begun, it goes on of itself, though the original cause be discontinued which first set it in motion. 5

A dread of mad dogs is the *epidemic terror* which now prevails, and the whole nation is at present actually groaning under the malignity of its influence. The people sally from their houses with that circumspection which is prudent in such as expect a mad dog at every turning. The physician publishes his prescription, the beadle prepares his halter, and a few of unusual bravery arm themselves with boots and buff gloves, in order to face the enemy if he should offer to attack them. In short, the whole people stand bravely upon their defence, and seem by their present spirit to show a resolution of not being tamely bit by mad dogs any longer. 15

Their manner of knowing whether a dog be mad or no, somewhat resembles the ancient European custom of trying witches. The old woman suspected was tied hand and foot and thrown into the water. If she swam, then she was instantly carried off to be burnt for a witch, if she sunk, then indeed she was acquitted of the charge, but drowned in the experiment. 25 In the same manner a crowd gather round a dog suspected of madness, and they begin by teasing the devoted animal on every side ; if he attempts to stand upon the defensive and bite, then is he unanimously found guilty, for *a mad dog always snaps at every thing* ; if, on the contrary, he strives to escape by running away, then he can expect no compassion, *for mad dogs always run straight forward before them.* 30

It is pleasant enough for a neutral being like me, who have no share in those ideal calamities, to mark the stages of this national disease. The terror at first feebly enters with a disregarded story of a little dog, that had gone through a neighbouring village, that was thought to be mad by several that had seen him. The next account comes, that a mastiff ran through a certain town, and had bit five geese, which immediately run mad, foamed at the bill, and died in great agonies soon after. Then comes an affecting history of a little boy bit in the leg, and gone down to be dipt in the salt water ; when the people have sufficiently shuddered at that, they are the next congealed with a frightful account of a man who was said lately to have died from a bite he had received some years before. This relation only prepares the way for another, still more hideous, as how the master of a family, with seven small children, were all bit by a mad lap dog, and how the poor father first perceived the infection by calling for a draught of water, where he saw the lap dog swimming in the cup.

When epidemic terror is thus once excited, every morning comes loaded with some new disaster ; as in stories of ghosts each loves to hear the account, though it only serves to make him uneasy, so here each listens with eagerness, and adds to the tidings with new circumstances of peculiar horror. A lady for instance, in the country, of very weak nerves has been frightened by the barking of a dog ; and this, alas ! too frequently happens. The story soon is improved and spreads, that a mad dog had frightened a lady of distinction. These circumstances begin to grow terrible before they have reached the neighbouring village, and there the report is that a lady of quality was *bit* by a mad mastiff. This account every moment gathers new strength and grows more dismal as it approaches the capital, and by the time it has arrived in



town the lady is described, with wild eyes, foaming mouth, running mad upon all four, barking like a dog, biting her servants, and at last smothered between two beds by the advice of her doctors : while the mad mastiff is in the mean time ranging the whole country over, slavering at the mouth, 5 and seeking whom he may devour.

My landlady, a good-natured woman, but a little credulous, waked me some mornings ago before the usual hour with horror and astonishment in her looks ; she desired me, if I had any regard for my safety, to keep within ; for a few 10 days ago so dismal an accident had happened, as to put all the world upon their guard. A mad dog down in the country, she assured me, had bit a farmer, who soon becoming mad ran into his own yard, and bit a fine brindled cow ; the cow quickly became as mad as the man, began to foam at 15 the mouth, and raising herself up, walked about on her hind legs, sometimes barking like a dog, and sometimes attempting to talk like the farmer. Upon examining the grounds of this story, I found my landlady had it from one neighbour, who had it from another neighbour, who heard it from very 20 good authority.

Were most stories of this nature thoroughly examined, it would be found that numbers of such as have been said to suffer were no way injured, and that of those who have been actually bitten, not one in a hundred was bit by a mad dog. 25 Such accounts in general therefore only serve to make the people miserable by false terrors, and sometimes fright the patient into actual frenzy, by creating those very symptoms they pretended to deplore.

But even allowing three or four to die in a season of this 30 terrible death (and four is probably too large a concession), yet still it is not considered, how many are preserved in their health and in their property by this devoted animal's services,

The midnight robber is kept at a distance, the insidious thief is often detected, the healthful chase repairs many a worn constitution, and the poor man finds in his dog a willing assistant, eager to lessen his toil, and content with the smallest retribution.

A dog, says one of the English poets, 'is an honest creature, and I am a friend to dogs.' Of all the beasts that graze the lawn or hunt the forest, a dog is the only animal, that leaving his fellows, attempts to cultivate the friendship of man ;  
 10 to man he looks in all his necessities with a speaking eye for assistance ; exerts for him all the little service in his power with cheerfulness and pleasure ; for him bears famine and fatigue with patience and resignation ; no injuries can abate his fidelity, no distress induce him to forsake his benefactor ;  
 15 studious to please, and fearing to offend, he is still an humble stedfast dependant, and in him alone fawning is not flattery. How unkind then to torture this faithful creature who has left the forest, to claim the protection of man ; how ungrateful a return to the trusty animal for all its services. Adieu.

20

## XXX

Letter LXX.—*From Lien Chi Altangi, to Hingpo, by the way of Moscow.*

THE Europeans are themselves blind, who describe Fortune without sight. No first rate beauty ever had finer eyes, or  
 25 saw more clearly ; they who have no other trade but seeking their fortune, need never hope to find her ; coquette-like she flies from her close pursuers, and at last fixes on the plodding mechanic, who stays at home, and minds his business.

I am amazed how men can call her blind, when, by the  
 30 company she keeps, she seems so very discerning. Wherever you see a gaming-table, be very sure Fortune is not there ;

wherever you see an house with the doors open, be very sure Fortune is not there ; when you see a man whose pocket-holes are laced with gold, be satisfied Fortune is not there ; wherever you see a beautiful woman good-natured and obliging, be convinced Fortune is never there. In short, she is 5 ever seen accompanying industry, and as often trundling a wheelbarrow, as lolling in a coach and six.

If you would make Fortune your friend, or to personize her no longer, if you desire, my son, to be rich and have money, be more eager to save than to acquire : when people 10 say, *Money is to be got here, and money is to be got there* take no notice ; mind your own business ; stay where you are ; and secure all you can get, without stirring. When you hear that your neighbour has picked up a purse of gold in the street, never run out into the same street, looking about 15 you in order to pick up such another : or when you are informed that he has made a fortune in one branch of business, never change your own, in order to be his rival. Do not desire to be rich all at once ; but patiently add farthing to farthing. Perhaps you despise the petty sum ; and yet they 20 who want a farthing, and have no friend that will lend them it, think farthings very good things. *Whang* the foolish miller, when he wanted a farthing in his distress, found that no friend would lend, because they knew he wanted. Did you ever read the story of *Whang* in our books of Chinese 25 learning ; he, who despising small sums, and grasping at all, lost even what he had ?

*Whang*, the miller, was naturally avaricious ; nobody loved money better than he, or more respected those that had it. When people would talk of a rich man in company, *Whang* 30 would say, I know him very well ; he and I have been long acquainted ; he and I are intimate ; he stood for a child of mine : but if ever a poor man was mentioned, he had not the

least knowledge of the man ; he might be very well for ought he knew ; but he was not fond of many acquaintances, and loved to choose his company.

*Whang*, however, with all his eagerness for riches, was in reality poor ; he had nothing but the profits of his mill to support him, but though these were small they were certain ; while his mill stood and went, he was sure of eating, and his frugality was such, that he every day laid some money by, which he would at intervals count and contemplate with much satisfaction. Yet still his acquisitions were not equal to his desires, he only found himself above want, whereas he desired to be possessed of affluence.

One day as he was indulging these wishes, he was informed, that a neighbour of his had found a pan of money under ground, having dreamed of it three nights running before. These tidings were daggers to the heart of poor *Whang*. Here am I, says he, toiling and moiling from morning till night for a few paltry farthings, while neighbour *Hunks* only goes quietly to bed, and dreams himself into thousands before morning. O that I could dream like him, with what pleasure would I dig round the pan ; how slyly would I carry it home ; not even my wife should see me ; and then, O the pleasure of thrusting one's hand into a heap of gold up to the elbow !

Such reflections only served to make the miller unhappy ; he discontinued his former assiduity, he was quite disgusted with small gains, and his customers began to forsake him. Every day he repeated the wish, and every night laid himself down in order to dream. Fortune that was for a long time unkind, at last however seemed to smile upon his distresses, and indulged him with the wished-for vision. He dreamed, that under a certain part of the foundation of his mill, there was concealed a monstrous pan of gold and diamonds, buried



deep in the ground, and covered with a large flat stone. He rose up, thanked the stars, that were at last pleased to take pity on his sufferings, and concealed his good luck from every person, as is usual in money dreams, in order to have the vision repeated the two succeeding nights, by which he should 5 be certain of its veracity. His wishes in this also were answered, he still dreamed of the same pan of money, in the very same place.

Now, therefore, it was past a doubt ; so getting up early the third morning, he repairs alone, with a mattock in his 10 hand, to the mill, and began to undermine that part of the wall which the vision directed. The first omen of success that he met was a broken mug : digging still deeper, he turns up a house tile, quite new and entire. At last, after much digging, he came to the broad flat stone, but then so large, that 15 it was beyond one man's strength to remove it. Here, cried he, in raptures to himself, here it is ; under this stone there is room for a very large pan of diamonds indeed. I must e'en go home to my wife, and tell her the whole affair, and get her to assist me in turning it up. Away therefore he goes, 20 and acquaints his wife with every circumstance of their good fortune. Her raptures on this occasion easily may be imagined ; she flew round his neck, and embraced him in an agony of joy ; but those transports however did not delay their eagerness to know the exact sum : returning therefore 25 speedily together to the place where *Whang* had been digging, there they found—not indeed the expected treasure, but the mill, their only support, undermined and fallen. Adieu.

## XXXI

Letter LXXI.—*From Lien Chi Altangi, to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking, in China.*

5 THE people of *London* are as fond of walking as our friends of *Peking* of riding ; one of the principal entertainments of the citizens here in summer is to repair about nightfall to a garden not far from town, where they walk about, shew their best clothes and best faces, and listen to a concert provided  
10 for the occasion.

I accepted an invitation a few evenings ago from my old friend, the man in black, to be one of a party that was to sup there, and at the appointed hour waited upon him at his lodgings. There I found the company assembled and expect-  
15 ing my arrival. Our party consisted of my friend in superlative finery, his stockings rolled, a black velvet waistcoat which was formerly new, and his grey wig combed down in imitation of hair. A pawnbroker's widow, of whom, by the bye, my friend was a professed admirer, dressed out in green  
20 damask, with three gold rings on every finger. Mr. *Tibbs*, the second-rate beau I have formerly described, together with his lady, in flimsy silk, dirty gauze instead of linen, and an hat as big as an umbrella.

Our first difficulty was in settling how we should set out.  
25 Mrs. *Tibbs* had a natural aversion to the water, and the widow being a little in flesh, as warmly protested against walking ; a coach was therefore agreed upon ; which being too small to carry five, Mr. *Tibbs* consented to sit in his wife's lap.

30 In this manner therefore we set forward, being entertained by the way with the bodings of Mr. *Tibbs*, who assured us, he did not expect to see a single creature for the evening above the degree of a cheesemonger ; that this was the last

night of the gardens, and that consequently we should be pestered with the nobility and gentry from *Thames-street* and *Crooked-lane*, with several other prophetic ejaculations probably inspired by the uneasiness of his situation.

The illuminations began before we arrived, and I must 5 confess, that upon entering the gardens, I found every sense overpaid with more than expected pleasure ; the lights every where glimmering through the scarcely moving trees ; the full-bodied concert bursting on the stillness of the night, the natural concert of the birds in the more retired part of the 10 Grove, vying with that which was formed by art ; the company gaily dressed, looking satisfaction, and the table spread with various delicacies, all conspired to fill my imagination with the visionary happiness of the *Arabian* lawgiver, and lifted me into an extasy of admiration. Head of *Confucius*, 15 cried I to my friend, this is fine ! this unites rural beauty with courtly magnificence ; if we except the virgins of immortality that hang on every tree, and may be plucked at every desire, I don't see how this falls short of *Mahomet's Paradise* ! As for virgins, cried my friend, it is true, they are a fruit that 20 don't much abound in our gardens here ; but if ladies as plenty as apples in autumn, and as complying as any *houri* of them all, can content you, I fancy we have no need to go to heaven for Paradise.

I was going to 'second his remarks, when we were called 25 to a consultation by Mr. *Tibbs* and the rest of the company, to know in what manner we were to lay out the evening to the greatest advantage. Mrs. *Tibbs* was for keeping the genteel walk of the garden, where she observed there was always the very best company ; the widow, on the contrary, 30 who came but once a season, was for securing a good standing-place to see the water-works, which she assured us would begin in less than an hour at farthest ; a dispute therefore

began, and as it was managed between two of very opposite characters, it threatened to grow more bitter at every reply. Mrs. *Tibbs* wondered how people could pretend to know the polite world who had received all their rudiments of breeding  
5 behind a counter ; to which the other replied, that tho' some people sat behind counters, yet they could sit at the head of their own tables too, and carve three good dishes of hot meat whenever they thought proper, which was more than some people could say for themselves, that hardly knew a  
10 rabbit and onions from a green goose and gooseberries.

It is hard to say where this might have ended, had not the husband, who probably knew the impetuosity of his wife's disposition, proposed to end the dispute by adjoining to a box, and try if there was any thing to be had for supper that  
15 was supportable. To this we all consented, but here a new distress arose ; Mr. and Mrs. *Tibbs* would sit in none but a genteel box, a box where they might see and be seen, one, as they expressed it, in the very focus of public view ; but such a box was not easy to be obtained, for though we were per-  
20 fectly convinced of our own gentility, and the gentility of our appearance, yet we found it a difficult matter to persuade the keepers of the boxes to be of our opinion ; they chose to reserve genteel boxes for what they judged more genteel company.

At last however we were fixed, though somewhat obscurely,  
25 and supplied with the usual entertainment of the place. The widow found the supper excellent, but Mrs. *Tibbs* thought every thing detestable : Come, come, my dear, cried the husband, by way of consolation, to be sure we can't find such dressing here as we have at lord Crump's or lady Crimp's ;  
30 but for Vauxhall dressing it is pretty good ; it is not their victuals indeed I find fault with, but their wine ; their wine, cried he, drinking off a glass, indeed, is most abominable.

By this last contradiction the widow was fairly conquered



in point of politeness. She perceived now that she had no pretensions in the world to taste, her very senses were vulgar, since she had praised detestable custard, and smacked at wretched wine ; she was therefore content to yield the victory, and for the rest of the night to listen and improve. It is 5 true, she would now and then forget herself, and confess she was pleased, but they soon brought her back again to miserable refinement. She once praised the painting of the box in which we were sitting, but was soon convinced that such paltry pieces ought rather to excite horror than satisfaction ; 10 she ventured again to commend one of the singers, but Mrs. *Tibbs* soon let her know, in the style of a connoisseur, that the singer in question had neither ear, voice, nor judgment.

Mr. *Tibbs* now willing to prove that his wife's pretensions to music were just, entreated her to favour the company with 15 a song ; but to this she gave a positive denial, For you know very well, my dear, says she, that I am not in voice to day, and when one's voice is not equal to one's judgment, what signifies singing ; besides as there is no accompaniment, it would be but spoiling music. All these excuses however were 20 overruled by the rest of the company, who, though one would think they already had music enough, joined in the entreaty. But particularly the widow, now willing to convince the company of her breeding, pressed so warmly that she seemed determined to take no refusal. At last, then, the lady com- 25 plied, and after humming for some minutes, began with such a voice and such affectation, as I could perceive gave but little satisfaction to any except her husband. He sat with rapture in his eye, and beat time with his hand on the table.

You must observe, my friend, that it is the custom of this 30 country, when a lady or gentleman happens to sing, for the company to sit as mute and motionless as statues. Every feature, every limb must seem to correspond in fixed attention,

and while the song continues, they are to remain in a state of universal petrification. In this mortifying situation we had continued for some time, listening to the song, and looking with tranquillity, when the master of the box came to inform us, that the water-works were going to begin. At this information I could instantly perceive the widow bounce from her seat ; but correcting herself, she sat down again, repressed by motives of good breeding. Mrs. *Tibbs*, who had seen the water-works an hundred times, resolved not to be interrupted, continued her song without any share of mercy, nor had the smallest pity on our impatience. The widow's face, I own, gave me high entertainment ; in it I could plainly read the struggle she felt between good breeding and curiosity ; she talked of the water-works the whole evening before, and seemed to have come merely in order to see them ; but then she could not bounce out in the very middle of a song, for that would be forfeiting all pretensions to high life, or high-lived company ever after : Mrs. *Tibbs* therefore kept on singing, and we continued to listen, till at last, when the song was just concluded, the waiter came to inform us that the water-works were over !

The water-works over, cried the widow ! the water-works over already, that's impossible, they can't be over so soon ! It is not my business, replied the fellow, to contradict your ladyship, I'll run again and see ; he went, and soon returned with a confirmation of the dismal tidings. No ceremony could now bind my friend's disappointed mistress, she testified her displeasure in the openest manner ; in short, she now began to find fault in turn, and at last, insisted upon going home, just at the time that Mr. and Mrs. *Tibbs* assured the company, that the polite hours were going to begin, and that the ladies would instantaneously be entertained with the horns. Adieu,

## XXXII

Letter LXXV.—*From Lien Chi Altangi, to Fum Ho2m, first President of the Ceremonial Academy, at Peking in China.*

THERE are numbers in this city who live by writing new 5 books ; and yet there are thousands of volumes in every large library unread and forgotten. This, upon my arrival, was one of those contradictions which I was unable to account for. Is it possible, said I, that there should be any demand for new books, before those already published are read ? Can 10 there be so many employed in producing a commodity, with which the market is already overstocked ; and with goods also better than any of modern manufacture !

What at first view appeared an inconsistency, is a proof at once of this people's wisdom and refinement. Even allow- 15 ing the works of their ancestors better written than theirs, yet those of the moderns acquire a real value, by being marked with the impression of the times. Antiquity has been in the possession of others, the present is our own ; let us first therefore learn to know what belongs to ourselves, and then, 20 if we have leisure, cast our reflections back to the reign of *Shonou*, who governed twenty thousand years before the creation of the moon.

The volumes of antiquity, like medals, may very well serve to amuse the curious, but the works of the moderns, like the 25 current coin of a kingdom, are much better for immediate use ; the former are often prized above their intrinsic value, and kept with care, the latter seldom pass for more than they are worth, and are often subject to the merciless hands of sweating critics, and clipping compilers ; the works of anti- 30 quity were even praised, those of the moderns read ; the treasures of our ancestors have our esteem, and we boast the

passion ; those of contemporary genius engage our heart, although we blush to own it. The visits we pay the former resemble those we pay the great ; the ceremony is troublesome, and yet such as we would not choose to forego ; our acquaintance with modern books, is like sitting with a friend ; our pride is not flattered in the interview, but it gives more internal satisfaction.

In proportion as society refines, new books must ever become more necessary. Savage rusticity is reclaimed by oral admonition alone ; but the elegant excesses of refinement are best corrected by the still voice of studious enquiry. In a polite age, almost every person becomes a reader, and receives more instruction from the press than the pulpit. The preaching bonze may instruct the illiterate peasant ; but nothing less than the insinuating address of a fine writer, can win its way to a heart already relaxed in all the effeminacy of refinement. Books are necessary to correct the vices of the polite, but those vices are ever changing, and the antidote should be changed accordingly ; should still be new.

Instead, therefore, of thinking the number of new publications here too great, I could wish it still greater, as they are the most useful instruments of reformation. Every country must be instructed either by *writers* or *preachers* ; but as the number of readers increases, the number of hearers is proportionably diminished, the writer becomes more useful, and the preaching bonze less necessary.

Instead, therefore, of complaining that writers are overpaid, when their works procure them a bare subsistence, I should imagine it the duty of a state not only to encourage their numbers, but their industry. A bonze is rewarded with immense riches for instructing only a few, even of the most ignorant, of the people ; and sure the poor scholar should not beg his bread, who is capable of instructing a million.



Of all rewards, I grant, the most pleasing to a man of real merit, is fame ; but a polite age, of all times, is that in which scarce any share of merit can acquire it. What numbers of fine writers in the latter empire of Rome, when refinement was carried to the highest pitch, have missed that fame and 5 immortality which they had fondly arrogated to themselves ! How many Greek authors, who wrote at that period when Constantinople was the refined mistress of the empire, now rest either not printed, or not read, in the libraries of Europe ! Those who came first, while either state as yet was barbarous, 10 carried all the reputation away. Authors, as the age refined, became more numerous, and their numbers destroyed their fame. It is but natural, therefore, for the writer, when conscious that his works will not procure him fame hereafter, to endeavour to make them turn out to his temporal interest 15 here.

Whatever be the motives which induce men to write, whether avarice or fame, the country becomes most wise and happy, in which they most serve for instructors. The countries where sacerdotal instruction alone is permitted, remain 20 in ignorance, superstition, and hopeless slavery. In England, where there are as many new books published as in all the rest of Europe together, a spirit of freedom and reason reigns among the people ; they have been often known to act like fools, they are generally found to think like men. 25

The only danger that attends a multiplicity of publications, is that some of them may be calculated to injure, rather than benefit society. But where writers are numerous, they also serve as a check upon each other ; and perhaps a literary inquisition is the most terrible punishment that can be con- 30 ceived, to a literary transgressor.

But, to do the English justice, there are but few offenders of this kind, their publications in general aim at mending

either the heart, or improving the common weal. The dullest writer talks of virtue, and liberty, and benevolence, with esteem ; tells his true story, filled with good and wholesome advice ; warns against slavery, bribery, or the bite of a mad  
 5 dog, and dresses up his little useful magazine of knowledge and entertainment, at least with a good intention. The dunces of France, on the other hand, who have less encouragement, are more vicious. Tender hearts, languishing eyes, Leonora in love at thirteen, extatic transports, stolen blisses,  
 10 are the frivolous subjects of their frivolous memoirs. In England, if a bawdy blockhead thus breaks in on the community, he sets his whole fraternity in a roar ; nor can he escape, even though he should fly to nobility for shelter.

Thus even dunces, my friend, may make themselves useful.  
 15 But there are others whom Nature has blest with talents above the rest of mankind ; men capable of thinking with precision, and impressing their thought with rapidity ; beings who diffuse those regards upon mankind, which others contract and  
 • settle upon themselves. These deserve every honour from  
 20 that community of which they are more peculiarly the children ; to such I would give my heart, since to them I am indebted for its humanity. Adieu.

### XXXIII

Letter LXXVII.—*From the same.*

25 THE shops of London are as well furnished as those of Pekin. Those of London have a picture hung at their door, informing the passengers what they have to sell, as those at  
 30 Pekin have a board to assure the buyer, that they have no intentions to cheat him.

I was this morning to buy silk for a night-cap ; immediately upon entering the mercer's shop, the master and his

two men, with wigs plastered with powder, appeared to ask my command. They were certainly the civilest people alive ; if I but looked, they flew to the place where I cast my eye ; every motion of mine sent them running round the whole shop for my satisfaction. I informed them that I 5 wanted what was good, and they shewed me not less than forty pieces, and each was better than the former ; the prettiest pattern in nature, and the fittest in the world for night-caps. My very good friend, said I to the mercer, you must not pretend to instruct me in silks, I know these 10 in particular to be no better than your mere flimsy *Bungees*. *That may be*, cried the mercer, who, I afterwards found, had never contradicted a man in his life, *I can't pretend to say but they may ; but I can assure you, my Lady Trail has had a sacque from this piece this very morning*. But friend, 15 said I, though my lady has chosen a sacque from it, I see no necessity that I should wear it for a night-cap. *That may be*, returned he again, *yet what becomes a pretty lady, will at any time look well on a handsome gentleman*. This short compliment was thrown in so very seasonably upon my 20 ugly face, that even though I disliked the silk, I desired him to cut me off the pattern of a night-cap.

While this business was consigned to his journeyman, the master himself took down some pieces of silk still finer than any I had yet seen, and spreading them before me, 25 *There*, cries he, *there's beauty ; my Lord Snakeskin has bespoke the fellow to this for the birth-night this very morning ; it would look charmingly in waistcoats*. But I don't want a waistcoat, replied I : *Not want a waistcoat ?* returned the mercer, *then I would advise you to buy one ; when 30 waistcoats are wanted, you may depend upon it they will come dear*. *Always buy before you want, and you are sure to be well used, as they say in Cheapside*. There was

so much justice in his advice, that I could not refuse taking it ; besides, the silk, which was really a good one, increased the temptation, so I gave orders for that too.

As I was waiting to have my bargains measured and cut, 5 which I know not how, they executed but slowly ; during the interval, the mercer entertained me with the modern manner of some of the nobility receiving company in their morning gowns ; *Perhaps, Sir, adds he, you have a mind to see what kind of silk is universally worn.* Without waiting 10 for my reply, he spreads a piece before me, which might be reckoned beautiful even in China. *If the nobility, continues he, were to know I sold this to any under a Right Honourable, I should certainly lose their custom ; you see, my Lord, it is at once rich, tasty, and quite the thing.* I 15 am no Lord, interrupted I.—*I beg pardon, cried he, but be pleased to remember, when you intend buying a morning gown, that you had an offer from me of something worth money. Conscience, Sir, conscience is my way of dealing ; you may buy a morning gown now, or you may stay till* 20 *they become dearer and less fashionable, but it is not my business to advise.* In short, most reverend Fum, he persuaded me to buy a morning gown also, and would probably have persuaded me to have bought half the goods in his shop, if I had staid long enough, or was furnished with 25 sufficient money.

Upon returning home, I could not help reflecting with some astonishment, how this very man with such a confined education and capacity, was yet capable of turning me as he thought proper, and moulding me to his incli- 30 nations ! I knew he was only answering his own purposes, even while he attempted to appear solicitous about mine ; yet by a voluntary infatuation, a sort of passion compounded of vanity and good nature, I walked into the snare with my



eyes open, and put myself to future pain in order to give him immediate pleasure. The wisdom of the ignorant, somewhat resembles the instinct of animals ; it is diffused in but a very narrow sphere, but within that circle it acts with vigour, uniformity, and success. Adieu. 5

## XXXIV

Letter LXXIX.—*From the same.*

THE two theatres, which serve to amuse the citizens here, are again opened for the winter. The mimetic troops, different from those of the state, begin their campaign when all 10 the others quit the field ; and at a time when the Europeans cease to destroy each other in reality, they are entertained with mock battles upon the stage.

The dancing master once more shakes his quivering feet ; the carpenter prepares his paradise of paste-board ; the hero 15 resolves to cover his forehead with brass, and the heroine begins to scour up her copper tail, preparative to future operations ; in short, all are in motion, from the theatrical letter-carrier in yellow clothes, to Alexander the Great that stands on a stool. 20

Both houses have already commenced hostilities. War, open war ! and no quarter received or given ! Two singing women, like heralds, have begun the contest ; the whole town is divided on this solemn occasion ; one has the finest pipe, the other the finest manner ; one curtesies to the ground, the 25 other salutes the audience with a smile ; one comes on with modesty which asks, the other with boldness which extorts applause ; one wears powder, the other has none ; one has the longest waist, but the other appears most easy ; all, all is important and serious ; the town as yet perseveres in its neu- 30 trality, a cause of such moment demands the most mature

deliberation, they continue to exhibit, and it is very possible this contest may continue to please to the end of the season.

But the generals of either army, have, as I am told, several reinforcements to lend occasional assistance. If they produce a pair of diamond buckles at one house, we have a pair of eyebrows that can match them at the other. If we outdo them in our attitude, they can overcome us by a shrug ; if we can bring more children on the stage, they can bring more guards in red clothes, who strut and shoulder their swords to the astonishment of every spectator.

They tell me here, that people frequent the theatre in order to be instructed as well as amused. I smile to hear the assertion. If I ever go to one of their playhouses, what with trumpets, hallooing behind the stage, and bawling upon it, I am quite dizzy before the performance is over. If I enter the house with any sentiments in my head, I am sure to have none, going away, the whole mind being filled with a dead march, a funeral procession, a cat-call, a jig, or a tempest.

There is perhaps nothing more easy than to write properly for the English theatre ; I am amazed that none are apprenticed to the trade. The author, when well acquainted with the value of thunder and lightning, when versed in all the mystery of scene-shifting and trap-doors ; when skilled in the proper periods to introduce a wire-walker, or a waterfall ; when instructed in every actor's peculiar talent, and capable of adapting his speeches to the supposed excellence ; when thus instructed, knows all that can give a modern audience pleasure. One player shines in an exclamation, another in a groan, a third in a horror, a fourth in a start, a fifth in a smile, a sixth faints, and a seventh fidgets round the stage with peculiar vivacity ; that piece therefore will succeed best where each has a proper opportunity of shin-

ing ; the actor's business is not so much to adapt himself to the poet, as the poet's to adapt himself to the actor !

The great secret, therefore, of tragedy-writing at present, is a perfect acquaintance with theatrical *ah's* and *oh's*, a certain number of these interspersed with *gods ! tortures, racks, and 5 damnation*, shall distort every actor almost into convulsions, and draw tears from every spectator ; a proper use of these will infallibly fill the whole house with applause. But above all, a whining scene must strike most forcibly. I would advise, from my present knowledge of the audience, the two 10 favourite players of the town to introduce a scene of this sort in every play. Towards the middle of the last act, I would have them enter with wild looks and out-spread arms ; there is no necessity for speaking, they are only to groan at each other, they must vary the tones of exclamation and 15 despair through the whole theatrical gamut, wring their figures into every shape of distress, and when their calamities have drawn a proper quantity of tears from the sympathetic spectators, they may go off in dumb solemnity at different doors, clasping their hands, or slapping their 20 pocket-holes ; this, which may be called a tragic pantomime, will answer every purpose of moving the passions, as well as words could have done, and it must save those expenses which go to reward an author.

All modern plays that would keep the audience alive, must 25 be conceived in this manner, and indeed, many a modern play is made up on no other plan. This is the merit that lifts up the heart, like opium, into a rapture of insensibility, and can dismiss the mind from all the fatigue of thinking : this is the eloquence that shines in many a long forgotten 30 scene, which has been reckoned excessive fine upon acting ; this the lightning that flashes no less in the hyperbolical

tyrant, *who breakfasts on the wind*, than in the little Norval, *as harmless as the babe unborn*. Adieu.

## XXXV

Letter LXXXI.—*From the same*.

5 I HAVE as yet given you but a short and imperfect description of the Ladies of England. Woman, my friend, is a subject not easily understood, even in China ; what therefore can be expected from my knowledge of the sex in a country where they are universally allowed to be riddles, and I but  
10 a stranger ?

To confess a truth, I was afraid to begin the description, lest the sex should undergo some new revolution before it was finished ; and my picture should thus become old before it could well be said to have ever been new. To-day they are  
15 lifted upon stilts, to-morrow they lower their heels and raise their heads ; their clothes at one time are bloated out with whalebone ; at present they have laid their hoops aside and are become as slim as mermaids. All, all is in a state of continual fluctuation, from the Mandarin's wife, who rattles  
20 through the streets in her chariot, to the humble sempstress, who clatters over the pavement in iron-shod pattens.

What chiefly distinguishes the sex at present is the train. As a lady's quality or fashion was once determined here by the circumference of her hoop, both are now measured by  
25 the length of her tail. Women of moderate fortunes are contented with tails moderately long ; but ladies of true taste and distinction set no bounds to their ambition in this particular. I am told the lady Mayoress, on days of ceremony, carries one longer than a bell-wether of Bantam,  
30 whose tail you know is trundled along in a wheel-barrow.

Sun of China, what contradictions do we find in this strange



world! not only the people of different countries think in opposition to each other, but the inhabitants of a single island are often found inconsistent with themselves; would you believe it? this very people, my Fum, who are so fond of seeing their women with long tails, at the same time dock 5 their horses to the very rump!!!

But you may easily guess that I am no way displeased with a fashion which tends to increase a demand for the commodities of the East, and is so very beneficial to the country in which I was born. Nothing can be better calculated to increase the price of silk than the present manner of dressing. A lady's train is not bought but at some expense, and after it has swept the public walks for a very few evenings, is fit to be worn no longer: more silk must be bought in order to repair the breach, and some ladies of 15 peculiar economy are thus found to patch up their tails eight or ten times in a season. This unnecessary consumption may introduce poverty here, but then we shall be the richer for it in China.

The man in black, who is a professed enemy to this manner of ornamenting the tail, assures me, there are numberless inconveniences attending it, and that a lady dressed up to the fashion is as much a cripple as any in Nankin. But his chief indignation is levelled at those who dress in this manner, without a proper fortune to support it. He assures me, 25 that he has known some, who would have a tail, though they wanted a petticoat, and others, who, without any other pretensions, fancied they became ladies merely from the addition of three superfluous yards of ragged silk; I know a thrifty good woman, continues he, who thinking herself obliged to carry a train like her betters, never walks from home without the uneasy apprehensions of wearing it out too 30

soon ; every excursion she makes gives her new anxiety, and her train is every bit as importunate, and wounds her peace as much, as the bladder we sometimes see tied to the tail of a cat.

- 5 Nay, he ventures to affirm, that a train may often bring a lady into the most critical circumstances ; for should a rude fellow, says he, offer to come up to ravish a kiss, and the lady attempt to avoid it, in retiring she must necessarily tread upon her train, and thus fall fairly upon her back, by which  
10 means every one knows,—her clothes may be spoiled.

The ladies here make no scruple to laugh at the smallness of a Chinese slipper, but I fancy our wives at China would have a more real cause of laughter, could they but see the immoderate length of an European train. Head of Con-  
15 fucius ! to view a human being crippling herself with a great unwieldy tail for our diversion ; backward she cannot go, forward she must move but slowly, and if ever she attempts to turn round, it must be in a circle not smaller than that described by the wheeling crocodile, when it would face an  
20 assailant. And yet to think that all this confers importance and majesty ! to think that a lady acquires additional respect from fifteen yards of trailing taffety ! I can't contain ; ha, ha, ha ! this is certainly a remnant of European barbarity ; the female Tartar dressed in sheep-skins is in far  
25 more convenient drapery. Their own writers have sometimes inveighed against the absurdity of this fashion, but perhaps it has never been ridiculed so well as upon the Italian theatre, where Pasquarielo being engaged to attend on the countess of Fernambroco, having one of his hands  
30 employed in carrying her muff, and the other her lap dog, he bears her train majestically along by sticking it in the waistband of his breeches Adieu.

## XXXVI

Letter LXXXII.—*From the same.*

A DISPUTE has for some time divided the philosophers of Europe ; it is debated, whether arts and sciences are more serviceable or prejudicial to mankind. They, who maintain 5 the cause of literature, endeavour to prove their usefulness from the impossibility of a large number of men subsisting in a small tract of country without them ; from the pleasure which attends the acquisition ; and from the influence of knowledge in promoting practical morality. 10

They who maintain the opposite opinion, display the happiness and innocence of those uncultivated nations who live without learning ; urge the numerous vices which are to be found only in polished society, enlarge upon the oppression, the cruelty and the blood which must necessarily 15 be shed, in order to cement civil society, and insist upon the happy equality of conditions in a barbarous state, preferable to the unnatural subordination of a more refined constitution.

This dispute, which has already given so much employment to speculative indolence, has been managed with much 20 ardour, and (not to suppress our sentiments) with but little sagacity. They who insist that the sciences are useful in *refined* society are certainly right, and they who maintain that *barbarous* nations are more happy without them, are right also ; but when one side for this reason attempts to 25 prove them as universally useful to the solitary barbarian, as to the native of a crowded common-wealth ; or when the other endeavours to banish them as prejudicial to all society, even from populous states as well as from the inhabitants of the wilderness, they are both wrong ; since that knowledge 30

which makes the happiness of a refined European, would be a torment to the precarious tenant of an Asiatic wild.

Let me, to prove this, transport the imagination for a moment to the midst of a forest in Siberia. There we behold the inhabitant, poor indeed, but equally fond of happiness with the most refined philosopher of China. The earth lies uncultivated and uninhabited for miles around him ; his little family and he the sole and undisputed possessors. In such circumstances Nature and Reason will induce him to prefer a hunter's life to that of cultivating the earth. He will certainly adhere to that manner of living which is carried on at the smallest expense of labour, and that food which is most agreeable to the appetite ; he will prefer indolent though precarious luxury to a laborious though permanent competence, and a knowledge of his own happiness will determine him to persevere in native barbarity.

In like manner his happiness will incline him to bind himself by no law : Laws are made in order to secure present property, but he is possessed of no property which he is afraid to lose, and desires no more than will be sufficient to sustain him ; to enter into compacts with others, would be undergoing a voluntary obligation without the expectance of any reward. He and his countrymen are tenants, not rivals, in the same inexhaustible forest ; the increased possessions of one by no means diminishes the expectations arising from equal assiduity in another ; there are no need of laws therefore to repress ambition, where there can be no mischief attending its most boundless gratifications.

Our solitary Siberian will, in like manner, find the sciences not only entirely useless in directing his practice, but disgusting even in speculation. In every contemplation our curiosity must be first excited by the *appearances* of things, before our reason undergoes the fatigue of investigating the



*causes.* Some of those appearances are produced by experiment, others by minute enquiry ; some arise from a knowledge of foreign climates, and others from an intimate study of our own. But there are few objects in comparison which present themselves to the inhabitant of a barbarous country ; 5 the game he hunts, or the transient cottage he builds, make up the chief objects of his concern ; his curiosity therefore must be proportionably less ; and if that is diminished, the reasoning faculty will be diminished in proportion.

Besides, sensual enjoyment adds wings to curiosity. We 10 consider few objects with ardent attention, but those which have some connection with our wishes, our pleasures, or our necessities. A desire of enjoyment first interests our passions in the pursuit, points out the object of investigation, and Reason then comments where sense has led the way. 15 An encrease in the number of our enjoyments therefore necessarily produces an encrease of scientific research ; but in countries where almost every enjoyment is wanting, Reason there seems destitute of its great inspirer, and speculation is the business of fools, when it becomes its own reward. 20

The barbarous Siberian is too wise, therefore, to exhaust his time in quest of knowledge, which neither curiosity prompts, nor pleasure impels him to pursue. When told of the exact admeasurement of a degree upon the equator at Quito, he feels no pleasure in the account ; when informed 25 that such a discovery tends to promote navigation and commerce, he finds himself no way interested in either. A discovery which some have pursued at the hazard of their lives, affects him with neither astonishment nor pleasure. He is satisfied with thoroughly understanding the few objects which 30 contribute to his own felicity, he knows the properest places where to lay the snare for the sable, and discerns the value of furs with more than European sagacity. More extended

knowledge would only serve to render him unhappy ; it might lend a ray to shew him the misery of his situation, but could not guide him in his efforts to avoid it. Ignorance is the happiness of the poor.

5 The misery of a being, endowed with sentiments above its capacity of fruition, is most admirably described in one of the fables of Locman, the Indian moralist. ' An elephant that had been peculiarly serviceable in fighting the battles of Wistnow, was ordered by the god to wish for whatever  
10 he thought proper, and the desire should be attended with immediate gratification. The elephant thanked his benefactor on bended knees, and desired to be endowed with the reason and the faculties of a man. Wistnow was sorry to hear the foolish request, and endeavoured to dissuade him  
15 from his misplaced ambition ; but finding it to no purpose, gave him at last such a portion of wisdom as could correct even the Zendavesta of Zoroaster. The reasoning elephant went away rejoicing in his new acquisition, and though his body still retained its ancient form, he found his appetites  
20 and passions entirely altered. He first considered that it would not only be more comfortable, but also more becoming to wear clothes ; but unhappily he had no method of making them himself, nor had he the use of speech to demand them from others, and this was the first time he felt real  
25 anxiety. He soon perceived how much more elegantly men were fed than he, therefore he began to loath his usual food and longed for those delicacies which adorn the tables of Princes ; but here again he found it impossible to be satisfied ; for though he could easily obtain flesh, yet he found  
30 it impossible to dress it in any degree of perfection. In short, every pleasure that contributed to the felicity of mankind, served only to render him more miserable, as he found himself utterly deprived of the power of enjoyment. In this

manner he led a repining, discontented life, detesting himself and displeased with his ill-judged ambition, till at last his benefactor Wistnow, taking compassion on his forlorn situation, restored him to the ignorance and the happiness which he was originally formed to enjoy.' 5

No, my friend, to attempt to introduce the sciences into a nation of wandering barbarians, is only to render them more miserable than even Nature designed they should be. A life of simplicity is best fitted to a state of solitude.

The great law-giver of Russia attempted to improve the 10 desolate inhabitants of Siberia, by sending among them some of the politest men of Europe. The consequence has shewn, that the country was as yet unfit to receive them ; they languished for a time with a sort of exotic malady, every day degenerated from themselves, and, at last, instead of render- 15 ing the country more polite, they conformed to the soil, and put on barbarity.

No, my friend, in order to make the sciences useful in any country, it must first become populous ; the inhabitants must go through the different stages of hunter, shepherd, and 20 husbandman : then when property becomes valuable, and consequently gives cause for injustice ; then when laws are appointed to repress injury, and secure possession, when men, by the sanction of those laws, become possessed of superfluity, when luxury is thus introduced and demands its 25 continual supply, then it is that the sciences become necessary and useful ; the state then cannot subsist without them ; they must then be introduced at once to teach men to draw the greatest possible quantity of pleasure from circumscribed possession ; and to restrain them within the bounds of 30 moderate enjoyment.

The sciences are not the cause of luxury, but its consequence, and this destroyer thus brings with it an antidote

which resists the virulence of its own poison. By asserting that luxury introduces the sciences, we assert a truth ; but if with those, who reject the utility of learning, we assert that the sciences also introduce luxury, we shall be at once false, 5 absurd, and ridiculous. Adieu.

## XXXVII

Letter LXXXVI.—*From Lien Chi Altangi, to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking, in China.*

10 OF all the places of amusement where gentlemen and ladies are entertained, I have not been yet to visit Newmarket. This, I am told, is a large field, where, upon certain occasions, three or four horses are brought together, then set a running, and that horse which runs swiftest wins the 15 wager.

This is reckoned a very polite and fashionable amusement here, much more followed by the nobility, than partridge fighting at Java, or paper kites at Madagascar ; several of the great here, I am told, understand as much of 20 farriery as their grooms ; and a horse, with any share of merit, can never want a patron among the nobility.

We have a description of this entertainment almost every day in some of the gazettes, as for instance : ‘ On such a day the Give and Take Plate was run for between his Grace’s 25 Crab, his Lordship’s Periwinkle, and ‘Squire Smackem’s Slamerkin. All rode their own horses. There was the greatest concourse of nobility that has been known here for several seasons. The odds were in favour of Crab in the beginning, but Slamerkin, after the first heat, seemed to have the 30 the match hollow ; however, it was soon seen, that Periwinkle improved in wind, which at last, turned out accord-



ingly ; Crab was run to a standstill, Slamerkin was knocked up, and Periwinkle was brought in with universal applause.' Thus, you see, Periwinkle received universal applause, and no doubt his Lordship came in for some share of that praise which was so liberally bestowed upon Periwinkle. Sun of 5 China ! how glorious must the Senator appear in his cap and leather breeches, his whip crossed in his mouth, and thus coming to the goal amongst the shouts of grooms, jockeys, pimps, stable-bred Dukes, and degraded Generals !

From the description of this princely amusement, now trans- 10 cribed, and from the great veneration I have for the characters of its principal promoters, I make no doubt but I shall look upon an horse-race with becoming reverence, pre-disposed as I am by a similar amusement, of which I have lately been a spectator ; for just now I happened to have 15 an opportunity of being present at a Cart-race.

Whether this contention between three carts of different parishes was promoted by a subscription among the nobility, or whether the grand-jury in council assembled had gloriously combined to encourage plaustral merit, I cannot take 20 upon me to determine ; but certain it is, the whole was conducted with the utmost regularity and decorum, and the company, which made a brilliant appearance, were universally of opinion that the sport was high, the running fine, and the riders influenced by no bribe. 25

It was run on the road from London to a village called Brentford, between a turnip cart, a dust cart, and a dung cart ; each of the owners condescending to mount and be his own driver. The odds at starting were Dust against Dung five to four ; but after half a mile going, the knowing ones found 30 themselves all on the wrong side, and it was Turnip against the field, brass to silver.

Soon however the contest became more doubtful ; Turnip

indeed kept the way, but it was perceived that Dung had better bottom. The road re-echoed with the shouts of the spectators; Dung against Turnip ! Turnip against Dung ! was now the universal cry; neck and neck; one rode lighter, but the  
5 other had more judgment. I could not but particularly observe the ardour with which the fair sex espoused the cause of the different riders on this occasion ; one was charmed with the unwashed beauties of Dung ; another was captivated with the patibulary aspect of Turnip : while in the  
10 mean time unfortunate gloomy Dust, who came whipping behind, was cheered by the encouragements of some, and pity of all.

The contention now continued for some time, without a possibility of determining to whom victory designed the  
15 prize. The winning-post appeared in view, and he who drove the turnip cart, assured himself of success ; and successful he might have been, had his horse been as ambitious as he ; but upon approaching a turn from the road, which led homewards, the horse fairly stood still, and refused to move  
20 a foot farther. The dung cart had scarce time to enjoy this temporary triumph, when it was pitched headlong into a ditch by the wayside, and the rider left to wallow in congenial mud. Dust in the mean time soon came up, and not being far from the post, came in amidst the shouts and  
25 acclamations of all the spectators, and greatly caressed by all the quality of Brentford. Fortune was kind only to one, who ought to have been favourable to all ; each had peculiar merit, each laboured hard to earn the prize, and each richly deserved the cart he drove.

30 I do not know whether this description may not have anticipated that which I intended giving of Newmarket. I am told there is little else to be seen even there. There may be some minute differences in the dress of the spectators,

but none at all in their understandings ; the quality of Brentford are as remarkable for politeness and delicacy, as the breeders of Newmarket. The quality of Brentford drive their own carts, and the honourable fraternity of Newmarket ride their own horses. In short, the matches in one place 5 are as rational as those in the other ; and it is more than probable, that turnips, dust, and dung, are all that can be found to furnish out description in either.

Forgive me, my friend, but a person like me, bred up in a philosophic seclusion, is apt to regard perhaps with too 10 much asperity, those occurrences which sink man below his station in Nature, and diminish the intrinsic value of humanity.

### XXXVIII

Letter LXXXVII.—*From Fum Hoam to Lien Chi Altangi.* 15

You tell me that people of Europe are wise ; but where lies their wisdom ? You say they are valiant too ; but I have some reasons to doubt of their valour. They are engaged in war among each other, yet apply to the Russians, their neighbours and ours, for assistance. Cultivating such an 20 alliance argues at once imprudence and timidity. All subsidies paid for such an aid is strengthening the Russians, already too powerful, and weakening the employers, already exhausted by intestine commotions.

I cannot avoid beholding the Russian empire as the na- 25 tural enemy of the more western parts of Europe ; as an enemy already possessed of great strength, and from the nature of the government, every day threatening to become more powerful. This extensive empire, which, both in Europe and Asia, occupies almost a third of the old world, was, 30 about two centuries ago, divided into separate kingdoms and

dukedom, and from such a division consequently feeble. Since the times, however, of John Basilides, it has increased in strength and extent ; and those untrodden forests, those innumerable savage animals which formerly covered the face of the country, are now removed, and colonies of mankind planted in their room. A kingdom thus enjoying peace internally, possessed of an unbounded extent of dominion, and learning the military art at the expense of others abroad, must every day grow more powerful ; and it is probable, we shall hear Russia, in future times, as formerly, called the *Officina Gentium*.

It was long the wish of Peter, their great monarch, to have a fort in some of the western parts of Europe ; many of his schemes and treaties were directed to this end, but happily for Europe he failed in them all. A fort in the power of this people would be like the possession of a floodgate ; and whenever ambition, interest, or necessity prompted, they might then be able to deluge the whole world with a barbarous inundation.

Believe me, my friend, I cannot sufficiently condemn the politicians of Europe, who thus make this powerful people arbitrators in their quarrel. The Russians are now at that period between refinement and barbarity, which seems most adapted to military achievement ; and if once they happen to get footing in the western parts of Europe, it is not the feeble efforts of the sons of effeminacy and dissention, that can serve to remove them. The fertile valley and soft climate, will ever be sufficient inducements to draw whole myriads from their native deserts, the trackless wild, or snowy mountain.

History, experience, reason, nature, expand the book of wisdom before the eyes of mankind, but they will not read. We have seen with terror a winged phalanx of famished



locusts each singly contemptible, but from multitude become hideous, cover, like clouds, the face of day, and threaten the whole world with ruin. We have seen them settling on the fertile plains of India and Egypt, destroying in an instant the labours and the hopes of nations ; sparing neither the 5 fruit of the earth nor the verdure of the fields, and changing into a frightful desert, landscapes of once luxuriant beauty. We have seen myriads of ants issuing together from the southern desert, like a torrent whose source was inexhaustible, succeeding each other without end, and removing 10 their destroyed forces with unwearied perseverance, bringing desolation wherever they came, banishing men and animals, and, when destitute of all subsistence, in heaps infecting the wilderness which they had made ! Like these have been the migrations of men. When as yet savage, and almost re- 15 sembling their brute partners in the forest, subject like them only to the instincts of Nature, and directed by hunger alone in the choice of an abode, how have we seen whole armies starting wild at once from their forests and their dens : Goths, Huns, Vandals, Saracens, Turks, Tartars, myriads of 20 men, animals in human form, without country, without name, without laws, out-powering by numbers all opposition, ravaging cities, overturning empires, and, after having destroyed whole nations, and spread extensive desolation, how have we seen them sink oppressed by some new enemy, more 25 barbarous and even more unknown than they ! Adieu.

### XXXIX

Letter LXXXVIII.—*From Lien Chi Altangi, to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking, in China.*

30

As the instruction of the fair sex in this country is entirely committed to the care of foreigners, as their language-

masters, music-masters, hair-frizzers, and governesses, are all from abroad, I had some intentions of opening a female academy myself, and made no doubt, as I was quite a foreigner, of meeting a favourable reception.

5 In this I intended to instruct the ladies in all the conjugal mysteries ; wives would be taught the art of managing husbands, and maids the skill of properly choosing them ; I would teach a wife how far she might venture to be sick without giving disgust ; she should be acquainted with the  
10 great benefits of the cholic in the stomach, and all the thorough-bred insolence of fashion ; maids should learn the secret of nicely distinguishing every competitor ; they should be able to know the difference between a pedant and a scholar, a citizen and a prig, a squire and his horse, a beau and  
15 his monkey ; but chiefly they should be taught the art of managing their smiles, from the contemptuous simper to the long laborious laugh.

But I have discontinued the project ; for what would signify teaching ladies the manner of governing or choosing  
20 husbands, when marriage is at present so much out of fashion, that a lady is very well off, who can get any husband at all. Celibacy now prevails in every rank of life, the streets are crowded with old bachelors, and the houses with ladies who have refused good offers, and are never  
25 likely to receive any for the future.

The only advice, therefore, I could give the fair sex as things stand at present, is to get husbands as fast as they can. There is certainly nothing in the whole creation, not even Babylon in ruins, more truly deplorable than a lady  
30 in the virgin bloom of sixty-three, or a battered unmarried beau, who squibs about from place to place, shewing his pig-tail wig and his ears. The one appears to my imagination

in the form of a double night-cap, or a roll of pomatum, the other in the shape of an electuary, or a box of pills.

I would once more therefore advise the ladies to get husbands. I would desire them not to discard an old lover without very sufficient reasons, nor treat the new with ill-nature till they know him false ; let not prudes allege the falseness of the sex, coquettes the pleasures of long courtship, or parents the necessary preliminaries of penny for penny. I have reasons that would silence even a casuist in this particular. In the first place, therefore, I divide the subject into fifteen heads, and then *sic argumentor*—but not to give you and myself the spleen, be contented at present with an Indian tale.

In a winding of the river Amidar, just before it falls into the Caspian sea, there lies an island unfrequented by the inhabitants of the Continent. In this seclusion, blest with all, that wild uncultivated Nature could bestow, lived a princess and her two daughters. She had been wrecked upon the coast while her children as yet were infants, who of consequence, though grown up, were entirely unacquainted with man. Yet, unexperienced as the young ladies were in the opposite sex, both early discovered symptoms, the one of prudery, the other of being a coquette. The eldest was ever learning maxims of wisdom and discretion from her mamma, while the youngest employed all her hours in gazing at her own face in a neighbouring fountain.

Their usual amusement in this solitude was fishing. Their mother had taught them all the secrets of the art : she shewed them which were the most likely places to throw out the line, what baits were most proper for the various seasons, and the best manner to draw up the finny prey when they had hooked it. In this manner they spent their time,



easy and innocent, till one day, the Princess being indisposed, desired them to go and catch her a sturgeon or a shark for supper, which she fancied might sit easy on her stomach. The daughters obeyed, and clapping on a gold fish, the usual bait on those occasions, went and sat upon one of the rocks, letting the gilded hook glide down with the stream.

On the opposite shore, farther down, at the mouth of the river, lived a diver for pearls ; a youth, who, by long habit in his trade, was almost grown amphibious ; so that he could remain whole hours at the bottom of the water, without ever fetching breath. He happened to be at that very instant diving, when the ladies were fishing with the gilded hook. Seeing therefore the bait, which to him had the appearance of real gold, he was resolved to seize the prize, but both hands being already filled with pearl oysters, he found himself obliged to snap at it with his mouth : The consequence is easily imagined ; the hook, before unperceived, was instantly fastened in his jaw, nor could he, with all his efforts or his floundering, get free.

‘ Sister, cries the youngest Princess, I have certainly caught a monstrous fish ; I never perceived any thing struggle so at the end of my line before ; come, and help me to draw it in.’ They both now therefore assisted in fishing up the Diver on shore ; but nothing could equal their surprise upon seeing him. ‘ Bless my eyes, cries the prude, what have we got here ; this is a very odd fish to be sure ; I never saw any thing in my life look so queer ; what eyes, what terrible claws, what a monstrous snout ; I have read of this monster somewhere before, it certainly must be a *Tanlang* that eats women ; let us throw it back into the sea where we found it.’



The Diver in the meantime stood upon the beach, at the end of the line, with the hook in his mouth, using every art that he thought could best excite pity, and particularly looking extremely tender, which is usual in such circumstances. The coquette, therefore in some measure influenced by the innocence of his looks, ventured to contradict her companion. 5  
'Upon my word, sister, says she, I see nothing in the animal so very terrible as you are pleased to apprehend; I think it may serve well enough for a change. Always sharks, and sturgeons, and lobsters, and crawfish, make me quite 10 sick. I fancy a slice of this nicely grilladed, and dressed up with shrimp-sauce, would be very pretty eating. I fancy mamma would like a bit with pickles above all things in the world; and if it should not sit easy on her stomach, it will be time enough to discontinue it when found disagreeable, 15 you know.' 'Horrid,' cries the prude, 'would the girl be poisoned? I tell you it is a *Tanlang*; I have read of it in twenty places. It is every where described as the most pernicious animal that ever infested the ocean. I am certain it is the most insidious, ravenous creature in the world; 20 and is certain destruction if taken internally.' The youngest sister was now therefore obliged to submit; both assisted in drawing the hook with some violence from the Diver's jaw; and he finding himself at liberty, bent his breast against the broad wave and disappeared in an instant. 25

Just at this juncture the mother came down to the beach, to know the cause of her daughters' delay; they told her every circumstance, describing the monster they had caught. The old lady was one of the most discreet women in the world; she was called the black-eyed Princess, from two 30 black eyes she had received in her youth, being a little addicted to a boxing in her liquor. 'Alas, my children, cries she, what have you done; the fish you caught was a man-

fish ; one of the most tame domestic animals in the world. We could have let him run and play about the garden, and he would have been twenty times more entertaining than our squirrel or monkey.' 'If that be all, says the young  
 5 coquette, we will fish for him again. If that be all, I'll hold three tooth-picks to one pound of snuff, I catch him whenever I please.' Accordingly they threw in their line once more, but with all their gilding, and paddling, and assiduity, they could never after catch the Diver. In this  
 10 state of solitude and disappointment they continued for many years, still fishing, but without success ; till, at last, the genius of the place, in pity to their distresses, changed their pride into a shrimp, and the coquette into an oyster. Adieu.

15

## XL

Letter XCI.—*From Lien Chi Altangi, to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking, in China.*

It is no unpleasing contemplation to consider the influence which soil and climate have upon the disposition of the in-  
 20 habitants, the animals and vegetables of different countries. That among the brute creation is much more visible than in man, and that in vegetables more than either. In some places those plants which are entirely poisonous at home lose their deleterious quality by being carried abroad ; there  
 25 are serpents in Macedonia so harmless as to be used as play-things for children, and we are told, that in some parts of Fez there are lions so very timorous as to be scared away, though coming in herds, by the cries of women.

I know of no country where the influence of climate and  
 30 soil is more visible than in England ; the same hidden cause which gives courage to their dogs and cocks, gives also fierce-

ness to their men. But chiefly this ferocity appears among the vulgar. The polite of every country pretty nearly resemble each other. But as in simpling, it is among the uncultivated productions of Nature, we are to examine the characteristic differences of climate and soil, so in an estimate 5 of the genius of the people, we must look among the sons of unpolished rusticity. The vulgar English therefore may be easily distinguished from all the rest of the world, by superior pride, impatience and a peculiar hardness of soul.

Perhaps no qualities in the world are more susceptible of 10 a fine polish than these ; artificial complaisance and easy deference being super-induced over these, generally forms a great character ; something at once elegant and majestic ; affable yet sincere. Such in general are the better sort ; but they who are left in primitive rudeness are the least disposed 15 for society with others, or comfort internally, of any people under the sun.

The poor indeed of every country, are but little prone to treat each other with tenderness ; their own miseries are too apt to engross all their pity ; and perhaps, too, they give but 20 little commiseration, as they find but little from others. But, in England, the poor treat each other upon every occasion with more than savage animosity, and as if they were in a state of open war by nature. In China, if two porters should meet in a narrow street, they would lay down their burthens, 25 make a thousand excuses to each other for the accidental interruption, and beg pardon on their knees ; if two men of the same occupation should meet here, they would first begin to scold, and at last to beat each other. One would think they had miseries enough resulting from penury and 30 labour not to increase them by ill nature among themselves, and subjection to new penalties, but such considerations never weigh with them.

But to recompense this strange absurdity, they are in the main generous, brave and enterprising. They feel the slightest injuries with a degree of ungoverned impatience, but resist the greatest calamities with surprising fortitude. Those 5 miseries under which any other people in the world would sink, they have often shewed they were capable of enduring ; if accidentally cast upon some desolate coast, their perseverance is beyond what any other nation is capable of sustaining ; if imprisoned for crimes, their efforts to escape are 10 greater than among others. The peculiar strength of their prisons, when compared to those elsewhere, argues their hardness ; even the strongest prisons I have ever seen in other countries, would be very insufficient to confine the untameable spirit of an Englishman. In short, what man 15 dares do in circumstances of danger, an Englishman will. His virtues seem to sleep in the calm, and are called out only to combat the kindred storm.

But the greatest eulogy of this people, is the generosity of their miscreants ; the tenderness in general of their robbers 20 and highwaymen. Perhaps no people can produce instances of the same kind, where the desperate mix pity with injustice ; still shewing that they understand a distinction in crimes, and even, in acts of violence, have still some tincture of remaining virtue. In every other country robbery and murder 25 go almost always together ; here it seldom happens, except upon ill-judged resistance or pursuit. The banditti of other countries are unmerciful to a supreme degree ; the highwayman and robber here are generous at least to the public, and pretend even to virtues in their intercourse among each other. 30 Taking therefore my opinion of the English from the virtues and vices practised among the vulgar, they at once present to a stranger all their faults, and keep their virtues up only for the enquiring eye of a philosopher,



Foreigners are generally shocked at their insolence upon first coming among them ; they find themselves ridiculed and insulted in every street ; they meet with none of those trifling civilities, so frequent elsewhere, which are instances of mutual good will without previous acquaintance : they 5 travel through the country either too ignorant or too obstinate to cultivate a closer acquaintance, meet every moment something to excite their disgust, and return home to characterize this as the region of spleen, insolence, and ill-nature. In short, England would be the last place in the 10 world I would travel to by way of amusement ; but the first for instruction. I would choose to have others, for my acquaintance but Englishmen for my friends.

## XLI

Letter 'XCII.—*To the same.*

15

THE mind is ever ingenious in making its own distress. The wandering beggar, who has none to protect, to feed, or to shelter him, fancies complete happiness in labour and a full meal ; take him from rags and want, feed, clothe, and employ him, his wishes now rise one step above his station ; 20 he could be happy were he possessed of raiment, food, and ease. Suppose his wishes gratified even in these, his prospects widen as he ascends ; he finds himself in affluence and tranquillity indeed, but indolence soon breeds anxiety, and he desires not only to be freed from pain, but to be possessed 25 of pleasure : pleasure is granted him, and this but opens his soul to ambition, and ambition will be sure to taint his future happiness, either with jealousy, disappointment, or fatigue.

But of all the arts of distress found out by man for his own torment, perhaps, that of philosophic misery is most 30 truly ridiculous, a passion nowhere carried to so extravagant

an excess, as in the country where I now reside. It is not enough to engage all the compassion of a philosopher here, that his own globe is harassed with wars, pestilence, or barbarity ; he shall grieve for the inhabitants of the moon, 5 if the situation of her imaginary mountains happen to alter ; and dread the extinction of the sun, if the spots on the surface happen to encrease ; one should imagine, that philosophy was introduced to make men happy, but here it serves to make hundreds miserable.

10 My landlady some days ago brought me the diary of a philosopher of this desponding sort, who had lodged in the apartment before me. It contains the history of a life, which seems to be one continued tissue of sorrow, apprehension, and distress. A single week will serve as a specimen of the 15 whole.

*Monday.* In what a transient, decaying situation are we placed, and what various reasons does philosophy furnish to to make mankind unhappy ! A single grain of mustard - shall continue to produce its similitude through numberless 20 successions ; yet what has been granted to this little seed has been denied to our planetary system ; the mustard-seed is still unaltered, but the system is growing old, and must quickly fall to decay. How terrible will it be, when the motions of all the planets have at last become so irregular 25 as to need repairing, when the moon shall fall into frightful paroxysms of alteration, when the earth, deviating from its ancient track, and with every other planet forgetting its circular revolutions, shall become so eccentric, that uncon- fined by the laws of system, it shall fly off into boundless 30 space, to knock against some distant world, or fall in upon the sun, either extinguishing his light, or burned up by his flames in a moment. Perhaps while I write, this dreadful change is begun. Shield me from universal ruin ! Yet idiot

man laughs, sings, and rejoices in the very face of the sun, and seems no way touched with his situation.

*Tuesday.* Went to bed in great distress, awaked and was comforted, by considering that this change was to happen at some indefinite time, and therefore, like death, the thoughts 5 of it might easily be borne. But there is a revolution, a fixed determined revolution, which must certainly come to pass ; yet which, by good fortune, I shall never feel, except in my posterity. The obliquity of the equator with the ecliptic, is now twenty minutes less than when it was ob- 10 served two thousand years ago by *Piteas*. If this be the case, in six thousand the obliquity will be still less by an whole degree. This being supposed, it is evident, that our earth, as *Louville* has clearly proved, has a motion, by which the climates must necessarily change place, and, in the space of 15 about one million of years, England shall actually travel to the Antarctic pole. I shudder at the change ! How shall our unhappy grand-children endure the hideous climate ! A million of years will soon be accomplished ; they are but a moment when compared to eternity ; then shall our charm- 20 ing country, as I may say, in a moment of time, resemble the hideous wilderness of *Nova Zembla*.

*Wednesday.* To-night, by my calculation, the long predicted comet is to make its first appearance. Heavens, what terrors are impending over our little dim speck of earth ! Dreadful 25 visitation ! Are we to be scorched in its fires, or only smothered in the vapour of its tail ? That is the question ! Thoughtless mortals, go build houses, plant orchards, purchase estates, for to-morrow you die. But what if the comet should not come ? That would be equally fatal. Comets are 30 servants which periodically return to supply the sun with fuel. If our sun therefore should be disappointed of the expected supply, and all his fuel be in the meantime burnt

out, he must expire like an exhausted taper. What a miserable situation must our earth be in without his enlivening ray? Have we not seen several neighbouring suns entirely disappear? Has not a fixed star, near the tail of the Ram, lately been quite extinguished?

*Thursday.* The comet has not yet appeared; I am sorry for it: first, sorry because my calculation is false; secondly, sorry lest the sun should want fuel; thirdly, sorry lest the wits should laugh at our erroneous predictions; and fourthly, sorry because if it appears to-night, it must necessarily come within the sphere of the earth's attraction; and heaven help the unhappy country on which it happens to fall.

*Friday.* Our whole society have been out all eager in search of the comet. We have seen not less than sixteen comets in different parts of the heavens. However we are unanimously resolved to fix upon one only to be the comet expected. That near Virgo wants nothing but a tail to fit it out completely for terrestrial admiration.

*Saturday.* The moon is, I find, at her old pranks. Her ap- pulses, librations, and other irregularities, indeed amaze me. My daughter too is this morning gone off with a grenadier. No way surprising. I was never able to give her a relish for wisdom. She ever promised to be a mere expletive in the creation. But the moon, the moon gives me real uneasiness; I fondly fancied I had fixed her. I had thought her constant, and constant only to me; but every night discovers her infidelity, and proves me a desolate and abandoned lover. Adieu.

## XLII

Letter XCIII.—*To the same.*

It is surprising what an influence title shall have upon the mind, even though these titles be of our own making. Like



ch'ldren we dress up the puppets in finery, and then stand in astonishment at the plastic wonder. I have been told of a rat-catcher here, who strolled for a long time about the villages near town, without finding any employment ; at last, however, he thought proper to take the title of his Majesty's Rat-catcher in ordinary, and this succeeded beyond his expectations ; when it was known that he caught rats at court, all were ready to give him countenance and employment.

But of all the people, they who make books seem most perfectly sensible of the advantage of titular dignity. All seem convinced, that a book written by vulgar hands, can neither instruct nor improve ; none but Kings, Chams, and Mandarines, can write with any probability of success. If the titles inform me right, not only Kings and Courtiers, but Emperors themselves in this country, periodically supply the press.

A man here who should write, and honestly confess that he wrote for bread, might as well send his manuscript to fire the baker's oven ; not one creature will read him ; all must be court-bred poets, or pretend at least to be court-bred, who can expect to please. Should the caitiff fairly avow a design of emptying our pockets and filling his own, every reader would instantly forsake him ; even those who wrote for bread themselves, would combine to worry him, perfectly sensible, that his attempts only served to take the bread out of their mouths.

And th's silly prepossession the more amazes me, when I consider, that almost all the excellent productions in wit that have appeared here, were purely the offspring of necessity ; their Drydens, Butlers, Otways, and Farquhars, were all writers for bread. Believe me, my friend, hunger has a most amazing faculty for sharpening the genius ; and he who with a full belly, can think like a hero, after a course of fasting, shall rise to the sublimity of a demi-god.

But what will most amaze, is, that this very set of men, who are now so much depreciated by fools, are however the very best writers they have among them at present. For my own part, were I to buy an hat, I would not have it  
 5 from a stocking-maker, but an hatter ; were I to buy shoes, I should not go to the tailor's for that purpose. It is just so with regard to wit : did I, for my life, desire to be well served, I would apply only to those who made it their trade, and lived by it. You smile at the oddity of my  
 10 opinion ; but he assured, my friend, that wit is in some measure mechanical : and that a man long habituated to catch at even its resemblance, will at last be happy enough to possess the substance : by a long habit of writing he acquires a justice of thinking, and a mastery of manner, which  
 15 holiday-writers, even with ten times his genius, may vainly attempt to equal.

How then are they deceived, who expect from title, dignity, and exterior circumstance, an excellence, which is in some measure acquired by habit, and sharpened by necessity ! you  
 20 have seen, like me, many literary reputations promoted by the influence of fashion, which have scarce survived the possessor ; you have seen the poor hardly earn the little reputation they acquired, and their merit only acknowledged when they were incapable of enjoying the pleasures of  
 25 popularity ; such, however, is the reputation worth possessing, that which is hardly earned is hardly lost. Adieu.

### XLIII

Letter XCIV.—*From Hingpo in Moscow, to Lien Chi Altangi in London.*

30 WHERE will my disappointments end ? Must I still be doomed to accuse the severity of my fortune, and shew my

constancy in distress rather than moderation in prosperity ? I had at least hopes of conveying my charming companion safe from the reach of every enemy, and of again restoring her to her native soil. But those hopes are now no more.

Upon leaving Terki, we took the nearest road to the dominions of Russia. We passed the Ural mountains covered in eternal snow, and traversed the forests of Ufa, where the prowling bear and shrieking hyena keep an undisputed possession. We next embarked upon the rapid river Bulija ; and made the best of our way to the banks of the Wolga, where it waters the fruitful valleys of Casan.

There were two vessels in company properly equipped and armed, in order to oppose the Wolga pirates, who, we were informed, infested this river. Of all mankind, these pirates are the most terrible. They are composed of the criminals and outlawed peasants of Russia, who fly to the forests that lie along the banks of the Wolga for protection. Here they join in parties, lead a savage life, and have no other subsistence but plunder. Being deprived of houses, friends, or a fixed habitation, they become more terrible even than the tiger, and as insensible to all the feelings of humanity. They neither give quarter to those they conquer, nor receive it when overpowered themselves. The severity of the laws against them serves to increase their barbarity, and seems to make them a neutral species of beings, between the wildness of the lion and the subtilty of the man. When taken alive their punishment is hideous. A floating gibbet is erected, which is let run down with the stream ; here upon an iron hook stuck under their ribs, and upon which the whole weight of their body depends, they are left to expire in the most terrible agonies ; some being thus found to linger several days successively.

We were but three days' voyage from the confluence of

this river into the Wolga, when we perceived at a distance behind us an armed barque coming up with the assistance of sails and oars, in order to attack us. The dreadful signal of death was hung upon the mast, and our captain with his  
5 glass could easily discern them to be pirates. It is impossible to express our consternation on this occasion ; the whole crew instantly came together to consult the properest means of safety. It was therefore soon determined to send off our women and valuable commodities in one of our vessels, and  
10 that the men should stay in the other and boldly oppose the enemy. This resolution was soon put into execution, and I now reluctantly parted from the beautiful Zelis for the first time since our retreat from Persia. The vessel in which she was, disappeared to my longing eyes, in proportion as  
15 that of the pirates approached us. They soon came up ; but, upon examining our strength, and perhaps sensible of the manner in which we had sent off our most valuable effects, they seemed more eager to pursue the vessel we had sent away, than attack us. In this manner they continued to  
20 harass us for three days ; still endeavouring to pass us without fighting. But, on the fourth day, finding it entirely impossible, and despairing to seize the expected booty, they desisted from their endeavours, and left us to pursue our voyage without interruption.

25 Our joy on this occasion was great ; but soon a disappointment more terrible, because unexpected, succeeded. The barque, in which our women and treasure were sent off, was wrecked upon the banks of the Wolga, for want of a proper number of hands to manage her, and the whole crew carried  
30 by the peasants up the country. Of this however we were not sensible till our arrival at Moscow ; where expecting to meet our separated barque, we were informed of its misfortune, and our loss. Need I paint the situation of my



mind on this occasion? Need I describe all I feel, when I despair of beholding the beautiful Zelis more! Fancy had dressed the future prospect of my life in the gayest colouring; but one unexpected stroke of fortune has robbed it of every charm. Her dear idea mixes with every scene of pleasure, 5 and without her presence to enliven it, the whole becomes tedious, insipid, insupportable. I will confess, now that she is lost, I will confess, I loved her; nor is it in the power of time, or of reason, to erase her image from my heart. Adieu.

## XLIV

10

Letter XCVIII.—*From Lien Chi Altangi to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy, at Peking in China.*

I HAD some intentions lately of going to visit Bedlam, the place where those who go mad are confined. I went to 15 wait upon the man in black to be my conductor, but I found him preparing to go to Westminster-hall, where the English hold their courts of justice. It gave me some surprise to find my friend engaged in a law-suit, but more so when he informed me that it had been depending for several years. 20 *How is it possible, cried I, for a man who knows the world to go to law? I am well acquainted with the courts of justice in China: they resemble rat-traps every one of them, nothing more easy to get in, but to get out again is attended with some difficulty, and more cunning than rats are gene- 25 rally found to possess!*

Faith, replied my friend, I should not have gone to law, but that I was assured of success before I began; things were presented to me in so alluring a light, that I thought by barely declaring myself a candidate for the prize, I had 30 nothing more to do but to enjoy the fruits of the victory.

Thus have I been upon the eve of an imaginary triumph every term these ten years, have travelled forward with victory ever in my view, but ever out of reach ; however, at present I fancy we have hampered our antagonist in such a manner, that without some unforeseen demur, we shall this very day lay him fairly on his back.

*If things be so situated, said I, I don't care if I attend you to the courts, and partake in the pleasure of your success. But prithee, continued I, as we set forward, what reasons have*  
10 *you to think an affair at last concluded, which has given you so many former disappointments? My lawyer tells me, returned he, that I have Salkeld and Ventris strong in my favour, and that there are no less than fifteen cases in point. I understand, said I, those are two of your judges who have*  
15 *already declared their opinions. Pardon me, replied my friend, Salkeld and Ventris are lawyers who some hundred years ago gave their opinion on cases similar to mine ; these opinions which make for me my lawyer is to cite, and those opinions which look another way, are cited by the lawyer*  
20 *employed by my antagonist ; as I observed, I have Salkeld and Ventris for me, he has Coke and Hales for him, and he that has most opinions, is most likely to carry his cause. But where is the necessity, cried I, of prolonging a suit by citing the opinions and reports of others, since the same good*  
25 *sense which determined lawyers in former ages may serve to guide your judges at this day? They at that time gave their opinions only from the light of reason, your judges have the same light at present to direct them, let me even add a greater, as in former ages, there were many prejudices from*  
30 *which the present is happily free. If arguing from authorities be exploded from every other branch of learning, why should it be particularly adhered to in this? I plainly foresee how such a method of investigation must embarrass every*

*suit, and even perplex the student : ceremonies will be multiplied, formalities must increase, and more time will thus be spent in learning the arts of litigation than in the discovery of right.*

I see, cries my friend, that you are for a speedy administration of justice, but all the world will grant that the more time that is taken up in considering any subject, the better it will be understood. Besides, it is the boast of an Englishman, that his property is secure, and all the world will grant that a deliberate administration of justice is the best way to secure his property. Why have we so many lawyers, but to secure our property ; why so many formalities, but to secure our property ? Not less than one hundred thousand families live in opulence, elegance and ease, merely by securing our property.

15

To embarrass justice, returned I, by a multiplicity of laws, or to hazard it by a confidence in our judges, are, I grant, the opposite rocks on which legislative wisdom has ever split ; in one case, the client resembles that Emperor, who is said to have been suffocated with the bedclothes, which were only designed to keep him warm ; in the other, to that town which let the enemy take possession of its walls, in order to shew the world how little they depended upon aught but courage for safety : But bless me, what numbers do I see here—all in black—how is it possible that half this multitude find employment ? Nothing so easily conceived, returned my companion, they live by watching each other. For instance, the catchpole watches the man in debt, the attorney watches the catchpole, the counsellor watches the attorney, the solicitor the counsellor, and all find sufficient employment. I conceive you, interrupted I, they watch each other, but it is the client that pays them all for watching ; it puts me in

30

mind of a Chinese Fable, which is entitled, *Five animals at a meal*.

A grasshopper, filled with dew, was merrily singing under a shade ; a whangam that eats grasshoppers had marked it 5 for its prey, and was just stretching forth to devour it ; a serpent that had for a long time fed only on whangams, was coiled up to fasten on the whangam ; a yellow bird was just upon the wing to dart upon the serpent ; a hawk had just stooped from above to seize the yellow bird ; all were 10 intent on their prey, and unmindful of their danger : So the whangam eat the grasshopper, the serpent eat the whangam, the yellow bird the serpent, and the hawk the yellow bird ; when sousing from on high, a vulture gobbled up the hawk, grasshopper, whangam, and all in a moment.

15 I had scarce finished my fable, when the lawyer came to inform my friend, that his cause was put off till another term, that money was wanted to retain, and that all the world was of opinion, that the very next hearing would bring him off victorious. If so, then cries my friend, I believe it will be 20 my wisest way to continue the cause for another term, and in the mean time, my friend here and I will go and see Bedlam. Adieu.

## XLV

Letter CIII.—*From Lien Chi Altangi to \*\*\*, Merchant in Amsterdam.*

I HAVE just received a letter from my son, in which he informs me of the fruitlessness of his endeavours to recover the lady with whom he fled from Persia. He strives to cover under the appearance of fortitude a heart torn with 30 anxiety and disappointment. I have offered little consolation ; since that but too frequently feeds the sorrow which



it pretends to deplore, and strengthens the impression, which nothing but the external rubs of time and accident can thoroughly efface.

He informs me of his intentions of quitting Moscow the first opportunity, and travelling by land to Amsterdam. I must, therefore, upon his arrival, entreat the continuance of your friendship ; and beg of you to provide him with proper directions for finding me in London. You can scarcely be sensible of the joy I expect upon seeing him once more : the ties between the father and the son among us of China are much more closely drawn than with you of Europe.

The remittances sent me from Argun to Moscow came in safety. I cannot sufficiently admire that spirit of honesty, which prevails through the whole country of Siberia : perhaps the savages of that desolate region are the only untutored people of the globe, that cultivate the moral virtues, even without knowing that their actions merit praise. I have been told surprising things of their goodness, benevolence, and generosity ; and the uninterrupted commerce between China and Russia, serves as a collateral confirmation.

*Let us, says the Chinese law-giver, admire the rude virtues of the ignorant, but rather imitate the delicate morals of the polite.* In the country where I reside, though honesty and benevolence be not so congenial, yet Art supplies the place of Nature. Though here every vice is carried to excess ; yet every virtue is practised also with unexampled superiority. A city like this is the soil for great virtues and great vices ; the villain can soon improve here in the deepest mysteries of deceiving ; and the practical philosopher can every day meet new incitements to mend his honest intentions. There are no pleasures, sensual or sentimental, which

this city does not produce ; yet I know not how, I could not be content to reside here for life. There is something so seducing in that spot in which we first had existence, that nothing but it can please ; whatever vicissitudes we experience in life, however we toil, or wheresoever we wander, our fatigued wishes still recur to home for tranquillity, we long to die in that spot which gave us birth, and in that pleasing expectation opiate every calamity.

You now therefore perceive that I have some intentions of leaving this country ; and yet my designed departure fills me with reluctance and regret. Though the friendships of travellers are generally more transient than vernal snows, still I feel an uneasiness at breaking the connections I have found since my arrival ; particularly I shall have no small pain in leaving my usual companion, guide, and instructor.

I shall wait for the arrival of my son before I set out. He shall be my companion in every intended journey for the future ; in his company I can support the fatigues of the way with redoubled ardour, pleased at once with conveying instruction, and exacting obedience. Adieu.

## XLVI

*Letter CV.—From Lien Chi Altangi, to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin, in China.*

THE time for the young King's coronation approaches ; the great and the little world look forward with impatience. A knight from the country, who has brought up his family to see and be seen on this occasion, has taken all the lower part of the house where I lodge. His wife is laying in a large quantity of silks, which the mercer tells her are to be fashionable next season ; and Miss, her daughter, has actually had her ears bored previous to the ceremony. In

all this bustle of preparation, I am considered as mere lumber, and have been shoved up two stories higher to make room for others my landlady seems perfectly convinced are my betters ; but whom, before me, she is contented with only calling very good company.

5

The little beau, who has now forced himself into my intimacy, was yesterday giving me a most minute detail of the intended procession. All men are eloquent upon their favourite topic ; and this seemed peculiarly adapted to the size and turn of his understanding. His whole mind was 10 blazoned over with a variety of glittering images ; coronets, escutcheons, lace, fringe, tassels, stones, bugles, and spun glass. ' Here, cried he, Garter is to walk ; and there Rouge Dragon marches with the escutcheons on his back. Here Clarencieux moves forward ; and there Blue Mantle dis- 15 dains to be left behind. Here the Aldermen march two and two ; and there the undaunted Champion of England, no way terrified at the very numerous appearance of gentlemen and ladies, rides forward in complete armour, and, with an intrepid air, throws down his glove. Ah, continues he, 20 should any be so hardy as to take up that fatal glove, and so accept the challenge, we should see fine sport ; the Champion would shew him no mercy ; he would soon teach him all his passes with a witness. However, I am afraid we shall have none willing to try it with him, upon the ap- 25 proaching occasion, for two reasons ; first, because his antagonist would stand a chance of being killed in the single combat ; and secondly, because if he escapes the Champion's arm, he would certainly be hanged for treason. No, no, I fancy none will be so hardy as to dispute it with a Cham- 30 pion like him inured to arms ; and we shall probably see him prancing unmolested away, holding his bridle thus in one hand, and brandishing his dram cup in the other.'

Some men have a manner of describing, which only wraps the subject in more than former obscurity ; thus I was unable, with all my companion's volubility, to form a distinct idea of the intended procession. I was certain, that the  
5 inauguration of a king should be conducted with solemnity and religious awe ; and I could not be persuaded that there was much solemnity in this description. If this be true, cried I to myself, the people of Europe surely have a strange manner of mixing solemn and fantastic images together ;  
10 pictures at once replete with burlesque and the sublime. At a time when the King enters into the most solemn compact with his people, nothing surely should be admitted to diminish from the real majesty of the ceremony. A ludicrous image brought in at such a time throws an air of  
15 ridicule upon the whole. It some way resembles a picture I have seen, designed by Albert Durer, where, amidst all the solemnity of that awful scene, a Deity judging, and a trembling world awaiting the decree, he has introduced a merry mortal trundling his scolding wife to hell in a wheel-  
20 barrow.

My companion, who mistook my silence during this interval of reflection, for the rapture of astonishment, proceeded to describe those frivolous parts of the show, that mostly struck his imagination ; and to assure me, that if I stayed  
25 in this country some months longer I should see fine things. 'For my own part,' continued he, 'I know already of fifteen suits of clothes, that would stand on one end with gold lace, all designed to be first shewn there ; and as for diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and pearls, we shall see them as thick as  
30 brass nails in a sedan chair. And then we are all to walk so majestically thus ; this foot always behind the foot before. The ladies are to fling nosegays ; the court poets to scatter verses ; the spectators are to be all in full dress ; Mrs. Tibbs,



in a new sacque, ruffles, and frenched hair ; look where you will, one thing finer than another ; Mrs. Tibbs curtsies to the Duchess ; her Grace returns the compliment with a bow. Largess, cries the Herald. Make room, cries the Gentleman Usher. Knock him down, cries the guard. Ah, 5 continued he, amazed at his own description, what an astonishing scene of grandeur can art produce from the smallest circumstance, when it thus actually turns to wonder one man putting on another man's hat.'

I now found his mind was entirely set upon the fopperies of 10 the pageant, and quite regardless of the real meaning of such costly preparations. *Pageants*, says Bacon, *are pretty things ; but we should rather study to make them elegant than expensive*. Processions, cavalcades, and all that fund of gay frippery, furnished out by tailors, barbers, and tire-women, 15 mechanically influence the mind into veneration : an Emperor, in his nightcap, would not meet with half the respect of an Emperor with a glittering crown. Politics resemble religion ; attempting to divest of ceremony, is the most certain method of bringing either into contempt. The weak 20 must have their inducements to admiration as well as the wise ; and it is the business of a sensible government, to impress all ranks with a sense of subordination, whether this be effected by a diamond buckle or a virtuous edict, a sumptuary law or a glass necklace. 25

This interval of reflection only gave my companion spirits to begin his description afresh ; and as a greater inducement to raise my curiosity, he informed me of the vast sums that were given by the spectators for places. 'That the ceremony must be fine, cries he, is very evident from the fine price that 30 is paid for seeing it. Several ladies have assured me, they could willingly part with one eye, rather than be prevented from looking on with the other. Come, come, continues he,

I have a friend, who, for my sake, will supply us with places at the most reasonable rates ; I 'll take care you shall not be imposed upon ; and he will inform you of the use, finery, rapture, splendour, and enchantment of the whole ceremony  
5 better than I.'

Follies, often repeated, lose their absurdity and assume the appearance of reason : his arguments were so often and so strongly enforced, that I had actually some thoughts of becoming a spectator. We accordingly went together to  
10 bespeak a place ; but guess my surprise, when the man demanded a purse of gold for a single seat : I could hardly believe him serious upon making the demand. 'Prithee, friend, cried I, after I have paid twenty pounds for sitting here an hour or two, can I bring a part of the Coronation  
15 back ?' *No, sir.* 'How long can I live upon it after I have come away ?' *Not long, Sir.* 'Can a Coronation clothe, feed, or fatten me ?' *Sir, replied the man, you seem to be under a mistake ; all that you can bring away, is the pleasure of having it to say, that you saw the Coronation.* 'Blast  
20 me, cries Tibbs, if that be all, there's no need of paying for that, since I am resolved to have that pleasure, whether I am there or no !'

I am conscious, my friend, that this is but a very confused description of the intended ceremony. You may object,  
25 that I neither settle rank, precedence, nor place ; that I seem ignorant whether Gules walks before or behind Garter ; that I have neither mentioned the dimensions of a Lord's cap, nor measured the length of a Lady's tail. I know your delight is in minute description ; and this I am unhappily dis-  
30 qualified from furnishing ; yet, upon the whole, I fancy, it will be no way comparable to the magnificence of our late Emperor Whangti's procession, when he was married to the moon, at which Fum Hoam himself presided in person. Adieu.

## XLVII

Letter CVII.—*To the same.*

It is the most usual method in every report, first to examine its probability, and then act as the conjuncture may require. The English, however, exert a different spirit in such circumstances ; they first act, and, when too late, begin to examine. From a knowledge of this disposition, there are several here who make it their business to frame new reports at every convenient interval, all tending to denounce ruin both on their contemporaries and their posterity. This denunciation 10 is eagerly caught up by the public ; away they fling to propagate the distress ; sell out at one place, buy in at another, grumble at their governors, shout in mobs, and when they have thus, for some time, behaved like fools, sit down coolly to argue and talk wisdom, to puzzle each other with syllogism, 15 and prepare for the next report that prevails, which is always attended with the same success.

Thus are they ever rising above one report only to sink into another. They resemble a dog in a well, pawing to get free. When he has raised his upper parts above water, and 20 every spectator imagines him disengaged, his lower parts drag him down again and sink him to the nose ; he makes new efforts to emerge, and every effort increasing his weakness, only tends to sink him the deeper.

There are some here, who, I am told, make a tolerable subsistence by the credulity of their countrymen : as they find the public fond of blood, wounds and death, they contrive political ruins suited to every month in the year ; this month the people are to be eaten up by the French in flat-bottomed boats ; the next by the soldiers, designed to beat the French 30 back ; now the people are going to jump down the gulf of



luxury ; and now nothing but a herring subscription can fish them up again. Time passes on ; the report proves false ; new circumstances produce new changes, but the people never change, they are persevering in folly.

5 In other countries, those boding politicians would be left to fret over their own schemes alone, and grow splenetic without hopes of infecting others. But England seems to be the very region where spleen delights to dwell ; a man not only can give an unbounded scope to the disorder in him-  
10 self, but may, if he pleases, propagate it over the whole kingdom, with a certainty of success. He has only to cry out, that the government, the government is all wrong, that their schemes are leading to ruin, that Britons are no more, every good member of the common-wealth thinks it his  
15 duty, in such a case, to deplore the universal decadence with sympathetic sorrow and, by fancying the constitution in a decay, absolutely to impair its vigour.

This people would laugh at my simplicity, should I advise them to be less sanguine in harbouring gloomy predictions,  
20 and examine coolly before they attempted to complain. I have just heard a story, which, though transacted in a private family, serves very well to describe the behaviour of the whole nation, in cases of threatened calamity. As there are public, so there are private incendiaries here. One of the last, either  
25 for the amusement of his friends, or to divert a fit of the spleen, lately sent a threatening letter to a worthy family in my neighbourhood, to this effect :

‘SIR, knowing you to be very rich, and finding myself to be very poor, I think proper to inform you, that I have  
30 learned the secret of poisoning man, woman, and child, without danger of detection. Don't be uneasy, Sir, you may take your choice of being poisoned in a fortnight, or poisoned in a month, or poisoned in six weeks ; you shall have full time



to settle your affairs. Though I'm poor, I love to do things like a gentleman. But, Sir, you must die ; I have determined it within my own breast that you must die. Blood, Sir, blood is my trade ; so I could wish you would this day six weeks take leave of your friends, wife, and family, for I 5 cannot possibly allow you longer time. To convince you more certainly of the power of my art, by which you may know I speak truth, take this letter, when you have read it, tear off the seal, fold it up, and give it to your favourite Dutch mastiff that sits by the fire, he will swallow it, Sir, 10 like a butter'd toast ; in three hours four minutes after he has taken it, he will attempt to bite off his own tongue, and half an hour after burst asunder in twenty pieces. Blood, blood, blood ; so no more at present from, Sir, your most obedient, most devoted humble servant to command till death.' 15

You may easily imagine the consternation into which this letter threw the whole good-natured family. The poor man, to whom it was addressed, was the more surprised, as not knowing how he could merit such inveterate malice. All the friends of the family were convened ; it was universally 20 agreed, that it was a most terrible affair, and that the government should be solicited to offer a reward and a pardon : a fellow of this kind would go on poisoning family after family ; and it was impossible to say where the destruction would end. In pursuance of these determinations, the go- 25 vernment was applied to ; strict search was made after the incendiary, but all in vain. At last, therefore, they recollected that the experiment was not yet tried upon the dog ; the Dutch mastiff was brought up, and placed in the midst of the friends and relations, the seal was torn off, the packet 30 folded up with care, and soon they found, to the great surprise of all—that the dog would not eat the letter. Adieu.

## XLVIII

Letter CXI.—*To the same.*

RELIGIOUS sects in England are far more numerous than in China. Every man who has interest enough to hire a conventicle here, may set up for himself and sell off a new religion. The sellers of the newest pattern at present give extreme good bargains; and let their disciples have a great deal of *confidence* for very little money.

Their shops are much frequented, and their customers every day increasing, for people are naturally fond of going to Paradise at as small expense as possible.

Yet you must not conceive this modern sect, as differing in opinion from those of the established religion: Difference of opinion indeed formerly divided their secretaries, and sometimes drew their armies to the field. White gowns and black mantles, flapped hats and cross pocket holes, were once the causes of quarrel; men then had some reason for fighting, they knew what they fought about; but at present, they are arrived at such refinement in religion-making, that they have actually formed a new sect without a new opinion; they quarrel for opinions they both equally defend; they hate each other, and that is all the difference between them.

But though their principles are the same, their practice is somewhat different. Those of the established religion laugh when they are pleased, and their groans are seldom extorted but by pain or danger. The new sect, on the contrary, weep for their amusement, and use little music, except a chorus of sighs and groans, or tunes that are made to imitate groaning. Laughter is their aversion; lovers court each other from the Lamentations; the bridegroom approaches the nuptial couch in sorrowful solemnity, and the bride looks more dismal than an undertaker's shop. Dancing

round the room is with them running in a direct line to the devil ; and as for gaming, though but in jest, they would sooner play with a rattle-snake's tail, than finger a dice-box.

By this time you perceive that I am describing a sect of 5  
Enthusiasts, and you have already compared them with the  
Faquirs, Bramins, and Talapoins of the East. Among these,  
you know, are generations that have been never known to  
smile, and voluntary affliction makes up all the merit they  
can boast of. Enthusiasms in every country produce the 10  
same effects ; stick the Faquir with pins, or confine the  
Bramin to a vermin hospital, spread the Talapoin on the  
ground, or load the Sectary's brow with contrition ; those  
worshippers who discard the light of reason, are ever gloomy ;  
their fears increase in proportion to their ignorance, as men 15  
are continually under apprehensions, who walk in darkness.

Yet there is still a stronger reason for the enthusiast's  
being an enemy to laughter, namely, his being himself so  
proper an object of ridicule. It is remarkable that the pro-  
pagators of false doctrines have ever been averse to mirth, 20  
and always begin by recommending gravity, when they in-  
tended to disseminate imposture. Fohi, the idol of China,  
is represented as having never laughed ; Zoroaster, the  
leader of the Bramins, is said to have laughed but twice,  
upon his coming into the world, and upon his leaving it ; 25  
Mahomet himself, though a lover of pleasure, was a pro-  
fessed opposer of gaiety. Upon a certain occasion telling his  
followers, that they would all appear naked at the resurrec-  
tion, his favourite wife represented such an assembly as im-  
modest and unbecoming. Foolish woman, cried the grave 30  
prophet, though the whole assembly be naked, on that day  
they shall have forgotten to laugh. Men like him opposed  
ridicule, because they knew it to be a most formidable

antagonist, and preached up gravity, to conceal their own want of importance.

Ridicule has ever been the most powerful enemy of enthusiasm, and properly the only antagonist that can be opposed to it with success. Persecution only serves to propagate new religions ; they acquire fresh vigour beneath the executioner and the axe, and like some vivacious insects, multiply by dissection. It is also impossible to combat enthusiasm with reason, for though it makes a shew of resistance, it soon eludes the pressure, refers you to distinctions not to be understood, and feelings which it cannot explain. A man who would endeavour to fix an enthusiast by argument, might as well attempt to spread quick-silver with his fingers. The only way to conquer a visionary is to despise him ; the stake, the faggot, and the disputing doctor, in some measure, ennoble the opinions they are brought to oppose ; they are harmless against innovating pride ; contempt alone is truly dreadful. Hunters generally know the most vulnerable part of the beasts they pursue, by the care which every animal takes to defend the side which is weakest ; on what side the enthusiast is most vulnerable, may be known by the care which he takes in the beginning to work his disciples into gravity, and guard them against the power of ridicule.

When Philip the Second was King of Spain, there was a contest in Salamanca between two orders of friars for superiority. The legend of one side contained more extraordinary miracles, but the legend of the other was reckoned most authentic. They reviled each other, as is usual in disputes of divinity, the people were divided into factions, and a civil war appeared unavoidable. In order to prevent such an imminent calamity, the combatants were prevailed upon to submit their legends to the fiery trial, and that which



came forth untouched by the fire, was to have the victory, and to be honoured with a double share of reference. Whenever the people flock to see a miracle, it is an hundred to one but that they see a miracle ; incredible therefore were the numbers that were gathered round upon this occasion ; 5 the friars on each side approached, and confidently threw their respective legends into the flames, when lo, to the utter disappointment of all the assembly, instead of a miracle, both legends were consumed. Nothing but this, turning both parties into contempt, could have 10 prevented the effusion of blood. The people now laughed at their former folly, and wondered why they fell out. Adieu.

## XLIX

Letter CXII.—*To the same.*

15

THE English are at present employed in celebrating a feast which becomes general every seventh year ; the Parliament of the nation being then dissolved and another appointed to be chosen. This solemnity falls infinitely short of our feast of the lanterns in magnificence and splendour ; it is also sur- 20 passed by others of the East in unanimity and pure devotion, but no festival in the world can compare with it for eating. Their eating indeed amazes me : Had I five hundred heads, and were each head furnished with brains, yet would they all be insufficient to compute the number of cows, pigs, 25 geese, and turkeys, which upon this occasion die for the good of their country !

To say the truth, eating seems to make a grand ingredient in all English parties of zeal, business, or amusement. When a Church is to be built, or an Hospital to be endowed, 30 the Directors assemble, and instead of consulting upon it,

they eat upon it, by which means the business goes forward with success. When the Poor are to be relieved, the officers appointed to dole out public charity, assemble and eat upon it : nor has it ever been known, that they filled the bellies of  
5 the poor till they had previously satisfied their own. But in the election of magistrates the people seem to exceed all bounds ; the merits of a candidate are often measured by the number of his treats ; his constituents assemble, eat upon him, and lend their applause, not to his integrity or sense,  
10 but to the quantities of his beef and brandy.

And yet I could forgive this people their plentiful meals on this occasion, as it is extremely natural for every man to eat a great deal when he gets it for nothing ; but what amazes me is, that all this good living no way contributes to improve  
15 their good humour. On the contrary they seem to lose their temper as they lose their appetites : every morsel they swallow, and every glass they pour down, serves to increase their animosity. Many an honest man, before as harmless as a tame rabbit, when loaded with a single election dinner, has  
20 become more dangerous than a charged culverin. Upon one of these occasions, I have actually seen a bloody-minded man-milliner sally forth at the head of a mob, determined to face a desperate pastry cook, who was general of the opposite party.

25 But you must not suppose they are without a pretext for thus beating each other. On the contrary, no man here is so uncivilized as to beat his neighbour without producing very sufficient reasons. One candidate, for instance, treats with gin, a spirit of their own manufacture ; another, always  
30 drinks brandy imported from abroad. Brandy is a wholesome liquor ; gin a liquor wholly their own. This then furnishes an obvious cause of quarrel, Whether it be most reasonable to get drunk with gin, or get drunk with brandy ? The mob

meet upon the debate : fight themselves sober ; and then draw off to get drunk again, and charge for another encounter. So that the English may now properly be said to be engaged in war ; since while they are subduing their enemies abroad, they are breaking each other's heads at home. 5

I lately made an excursion to a neighbouring vilage, in order to be a spectator of the ceremonies practised upon this occasion. I left town in company with three fiddlers, nine dozen of hams, and a corporation poet, which were designed 10 as reinforcements to the gin-drinking party. We entered the town with a very good face ; the fiddlers, no way intimidated by the enemy, kept handling their arms up the principal street. By this prudent manœuvre they took peaceable possession of their headquarters at hearing the shouts of 15 multitudes, who seemed perfectly rejoiced at hearing their music, but above all at seeing their bacon.

I must own I could not avoid being pleased to see all ranks of people on this occasion, levelled into an equality, and the poor, in some measure, enjoying the primitive privileges of 20 Nature. If there was any distinction shown, the lowest of the people seemed to receive it from the rich. I could perceive a cobbler with a levee at his door, and an haberdasher giving audience from behind his counter. But my reflections were soon interrupted by a mob, who demanded whether 25 I was for the distillery or the brewery ? as these were terms with which I was totally unacquainted, I chose at first to be silent ; however, I know not what might have been the consequence of my reserve, had not the attention of the mob been called off to a skirmish between a brandy-drinker's cow, 30 and a gin-drinker's mastiff, which turned out greatly to the satisfaction of the mob in favour of the mastiff.

This spectacle, which afforded high entertainment, was at

last ended by the appearance of one of the candidates, who came to harangue the mob ; he made a very pathetic speech upon the late excessive importation of foreign drams, and the downfall of the distillery ; I could see some of the audience shed tears. He was accompanied in his procession by Mrs. Deputy and Mrs. Mayoress. Mrs. Deputy was not in the least in liquor ; and for Mrs. Mayoress, one of the spectators assured me in my ear that,—she was a very fine woman before she had the small pox.

10 Mixing with the crowd, I was now conducted to the hall where the magistrates are chosen : but what tongue can describe this scene of confusion ? The whole crowd seemed equally inspired with anger, jealousy, politics, patriotism, and punch : I remarked one figure that was carried up by  
15 two men upon this occasion. I at first began to pity his infirmities as natural, but soon found the fellow so drunk that he could not stand ; another made his appearance to give his vote, but though he could stand, he actually lost the use of his tongue, and remained silent ; a third, who, though  
20 excessively drunk, could both stand and speak, being asked the candidate's name for whom he voted, could be prevailed upon to make no other answer, but tobacco and brandy. In short, an election-hall seems to be a theatre where every passion is seen without disguise ; a school where fools may  
25 readily become worse, and where philosophers may gather wisdom. Adieu.

## L

Letter CXVII.—*To the same.*

THE clock just struck two, the expiring taper rises and sinks  
30 in the socket, the watchman forgets the hour in slumber, the laborious and the happy are at rest, and nothing wakes but



meditation, guilt, revelry, and despair. The drunkard once more fills the destroying bowl, the robber walks his midnight round, and the suicide lifts his guilty arm against his own sacred person.

Let me no longer waste the night over the page of anti- 5  
quity, or the sallies of contemporary genius, but pursue the  
solitary walk, where vanity, ever changing, but a few hours  
past, walked before me, where she kept up the pageant, and  
now, like a froward child, seems hushed with her own  
importunities. 10

What a gloom hangs all round ; the dying lamp feebly  
emits a yellow gleam, no sound is heard but of the chiming  
clock, or the distant watch-dog. All the bustle of human  
pride is forgotten ; an hour like this may well display the  
emptiness of human vanity. 15

There will come a time when this temporary solitude may  
be made continual, and the city itself, like its inhabitants,  
fade away, and leave a desert in its room.

What cities, as great as this, have once triumphed in exis-  
tence, had their victories as great, joy as just, and as unbound- 20  
ed, and with short-sighted presumption, promised themselves  
immortality. Posterity can hardly trace the situation of  
some. The sorrowful traveller wanders over the awful ruins  
of others ; and, as he beholds, he learns wisdom, and feels  
the transience of every sublunary possession. 25

Here, he cries, stood their citadel, now grown over with  
weeds ; there their senate-house, but now the haunt of every  
noxious reptile ; temples and theatres stood here, now only  
an undistinguished heap of ruin. They are fallen, for luxury  
and avarice first made them feeble. The rewards of state 30  
were conferred on amusing, and not on useful, members of

society. Their riches and opulence invited the invaders, who though at first repulsed, returned again, conquered by perseverance, and at last swept the defendants into undistinguished destruction.

5 How few appear in those streets, which, but some few hours ago, were crowded ; and those who appear, now no longer wear their daily mask, nor attempt to hide their lewdness or their misery.

But who are those who make the streets their couch, and  
10 find a short repose from wretchedness at the doors of the opulent ? These are strangers, wanderers, and orphans, whose circumstances are too humble to expect redress, and whose distresses are too great even for pity. Their wretchedness excites rather horror than pity. Some are without  
15 the covering even of rags, and others emaciated with disease ; the world has disclaimed them ; society turns its back upon their distress, and has given them up to nakedness and hunger. These poor shivering females have once seen happier days, and been flattered into beauty. They have been  
20 prostituted to the gay luxurious villain, and are now turned out to meet the severity of winter. Perhaps, now lying at the doors of their betrayers, they sue to wretches whose hearts are insensible, or debauchees who may curse, but will not relieve them.

25 Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the suffering of wretches I cannot relieve ! Poor houseless creatures ! the world will give you reproaches, but will not give you relief. The slightest misfortunes of the great, the most imaginary uneasiness of the rich, are aggravated with all the power of  
30 eloquence, and held up to engage our attention and sympathetic sorrow. The poor weep unheeded, persecuted by every subordinate species of tyranny ; and every law, which gives others security, becomes an enemy to them.

Why was this heart of mine formed with so much sensibility ! or why was not my fortune adapted to its impulse ! Tenderness, without a capacity of relieving, only makes the man who feels it more wretched than the object which sues for assistance. Adieu.

5

## LI

Letter CXIX.—*From Lien Chi Altangi, to Fum Hoam, first President of the Ceremonial Academy at Peking, in China.*

THE misfortunes of the great, my friend, are held up to 10 engage our attention, are enlarged upon in tones of declamation, and the world is called upon to gaze at the noble sufferers ; they have at once the comfort of admiration and pity.

Yet where is the magnanimity of bearing misfortunes when 15 the whole world is looking on ? Men in such circumstances can act bravely even from motives of vanity. He only who, in the vale of obscurity, can brave adversity, who without friends to encourage, acquaintances to pity, or even without hope to alleviate his distresses, can behave with tranquillity 20 and indifference, is truly great : whether peasant or courtier, he deserves admiration, and should be held up for our imitation and respect.

The miseries of the poor are, however, entirely disregarded ; though some undergo more real hardships in one day, than 25 the great in their whole lives. It is indeed inconceivable what difficulties the meanest English sailor or soldier endures without murmuring or regret. Every day is to him a day of misery, and yet he bears his hard fate without repining.

30

With what indignation do I hear the heroes of tragedy complain of misfortunes and hardships, whose greatest calamity is found in arrogance and pride. Their severest distresses are pleasures, compared to what many of the adventurous poor every day sustain, without murmuring. These may eat, drink, and sleep, have slaves to attend them, and are sure of subsistence for life, while many of their fellow-creatures are obliged to wander, without a friend to comfort or to assist them, find enmity in every law, and are too poor to obtain even justice.

I have been led into these reflections, from accidentally meeting some days ago a poor fellow begging at one of the outlets of this town, with a wooden leg. I was curious to learn what had reduced him to his present situation ; and after giving him what I thought proper, desired to know the history of his life and misfortunes, and the manner in which he was reduced to his present distress. The disabled soldier, for such he was, with an intrepidity truly British, leaning on his crutch, put himself into an attitude to comply with my request, and gave me his history as follows :

‘ As for misfortunes, Sir, I cannot pretend to have gone through more than others. Except the loss of my limb, and my being obliged to beg, I don’t know any reason, thank heaven, that I have to complain ; there are some who have lost both legs and an eye ; but, thank heaven, it is not quite so bad with me.

‘ My father was a labourer in the country, and died when I was five years old ; so I was put upon the parish. As he had been a wandering sort of a man, the parishioners were not able to tell to what parish I belonged, or where I was born ; so they sent me to another parish, and that parish sent me to the third, till at last it was thought I belonged to



no parish at all. At length, however, they fixed me. I had some disposition to be a scholar, and had actually learned my letters ; but the master of the workhouse put me to business, as soon as I was able to handle a mallet.

‘ Here I lived an easy kind of a life for five years. I only 5 wrought ten hours in the day, and had my meat and drink provided for my labour. It is true, I was not suffered to stir far from the house, for fear I should run away : but what of that ? I had the liberty of the whole house, and the yard before the door, and that was enough for me. 10

‘ I was next bound out to a farmer, where I was up both early and late, but I eat and drank well, and liked my business well enough, till he died. Being then obliged to provide for myself, I was resolved to go and seek my fortune. Thus I lived, and went from town to town, working when I could 15 get employment, and starving when I could get none, and might have lived so still. But happening one day to go through a field belonging to a magistrate, I spy’d a hare crossing the path just before me. I believe the devil put it in my head to fling my stick at it : well, what will you have 20 on ’t ? I kill’d the hare, and was bringing it away in triumph, when the justice himself met me : he called me a villain, and collaring me, desired I would give an account of myself. I began immediately to give a full account of all that I knew of my breed, seed, and generation ; but though I 25 gave a very long account, the justice said, I could give no account of myself ; so I was indicted, and found guilty of being poor, and sent to Newgate, in order to be transported to the plantations.

‘ People may say this and that of being in jail ; but for my 30 part, I found Newgate as agreeable a place as ever I was in, in all my life. I had my belly full to eat and drink, and

did no work ; but alas, this kind of life was too good to last for ever ! I was taken out of prison, after five months, put on board of a ship, and sent off with two hundred more. Our passage was but indifferent, for we were all confined in the hold, and died very fast for want of sweet air and provisions ; but for my part, I did not want meat, because I had a fever all the way ; Providence was kind when provisions grew short, it took away my desire of eating. When we came ashore, we were sold to the planters. I was bound for seven years, and as I was no scholar, for I had forgotten my letters, I was obliged to work among the negroes ; and served out my time, as in duty bound to do.

‘ When my time was expired, I worked my passage home, and glad I was to see Old England again, because I loved my country. O liberty, liberty, liberty, that is the property of every Englishman, and I will die in its defence : I was afraid, however, that I should be indicted for a vagabond once more, so did not much care to go into the country, but kept about town, and did little jobs when I could get them. I was very happy in this manner for some time ; till one evening, coming home from work, two men knocked me down, and then desired me to stand still. They belonged to a press gang : I was carried before the justice, and as I could give no account of myself (that was the thing that always hobbled me) I had my choice left, whether to go on board a man of war, or list for a soldier ; I chose to be a soldier, and in this post of a gentleman, I served two campaigns, was at the battles in Flanders, and received but one wound through the breast, which is troublesome to this day.

30 ‘ When the peace came on, I was discharged : and as I could not work, because my wound was sometimes painful, I listed for a landman in the East-India company's service.

I here fought the French in six pitched battles ; and verily believe, that if I could read or write, our captain would have given me promotion, and made me a corporal. But that was not my good fortune, I soon fell sick, and when I became good for nothing, got leave to return home again with forty 5 pounds in my pocket, which I saved in the service. This was at the beginning of the present war, so I hoped to be set on shore, and to have the pleasure of spending my money ; but the government wanted men, and I was pressed again, before ever I could set foot on shore. 10

‘ The boatswain found me, as he said, an obstinate fellow : he swore that I understood my business perfectly well, but that I pretended sickness merely to be idle : God knows, I knew nothing of sea-business. He beat me without considering what he was about. But still my forty pounds was 15 some comfort to me under every beating ; the money was my comfort, and the money I might have had to this day ; but that our ship was taken by the French, and so I lost it all !

‘ Our crew was carried into a French prison, and many of 20 them died, because they were not used to live in a jail ; but for my part it was nothing to me, for I was seasoned. One night, however, as I was sleeping on the bed of boards, with a warm blanket about me (for I always loved to lie well), I was awaked by the boatswain, who had a dark lantern by 25 his hand. “ Jack, says he to me, will you knock out the French sentry’s brains ? ” “ I don’t care, says I, striving to keep myself awake, if I lend a hand.” “ Then follow me, says he, and I hope we shall do business.” So up I got, and tied my blanket, which was all the clothes I had, about my 30 middle, and went with him to fight the Frenchman : we had no arms ; but one Englishman is able to beat five French

at any time ; so we went down to the door, where both sentries were posted, and rushing upon them, seized their arms in a moment, and knocked them down. From thence, nine of us ran together to the quay, and seizing the first boat  
5 we met, got out of the harbour, and put to sea : we had not been here three days, before we were taken up by an English privateer, who was glad of so many good hands ; and we consented to run our chance. However, we had not so much luck as we expected. In three days we fell in with a French  
10 man of war of forty guns, while we had but twenty-three ; so to it we went. The fight lasted for three hours, and I verily believe we should have taken the Frenchman, but unfortunately, we lost almost all our men, just as we were going to get the victory. I was once more in the power of  
15 the French, and I believe it would have gone hard with me, had I been brought back to my old jail in Brest ; but by good fortune, we were retaken and carried to England once more.

‘ I had almost forgot to tell you, that in this last engagement, I was wounded in two places ; I lost four fingers of the  
20 left hand, and my leg was shot off. Had I the good fortune to have lost my leg and use of my hand on board a king’s ship, and not a privateer, I should have been entitled to clothing and maintenance during the rest of my life, but that was not my chance ; one man is born with a silver spoon  
25 in his mouth, and another with a wooden ladle. However, blessed be God, I enjoy good health, and have no enemy in this world that I know of, but the French, and the Justice of Peace.’

Thus saying, he limped off, leaving my friend and me in  
30 admiration of his intrepidity and content ; nor could we avoid acknowledging, that an habitual acquaintance with misery is the truest school of fortitude and philosophy.  
Adieu.



## LII

Letter CXXII.—*From the same.*

My long residence here begins to fatigue me as every object ceases to be new, it no longer continues to be pleasing ; some minds are so fond of variety, that pleasure itself, if per- 5  
manent, would be insupportable, and we are thus obliged to solicit new happiness even by courting distress : I only, therefore, wait the arrival of my son to vary this trifling scene, and borrow new pleasure from danger and fatigue. A life, I own, thus spent in wandering from place to place is at best 10  
but empty dissipation. But to pursue trifles is the lot of humanity ; and whether we bustle in a pantomime or strut at a coronation ; whether we shout at a bonfire or harangue in a senate-house ; whatever object we follow, it will at last surely conduct us to futility and disappointment. The wise 15  
bustle and laugh as they walk in the pageant, but fools bustle and are important ; and this probably is all the difference between them.

This may be an apology for the levity of my former correspondence ; I talked of trifles, and I knew that they were 20  
trifles ; to make the things of this life ridiculous, it was only sufficient to call them by their names.

In other respects, I have omitted several striking circumstances in the description of this country, as supposing them either already known to you, or as not being thoroughly known 25  
to myself. But there is one omission for which I expect no forgiveness, namely, my being totally silent upon their buildings, roads, rivers, and mountains. This is a branch of science, on which all other travellers are so very prolix, that my deficiency will appear the more glaring. With what pleasure, 30  
for instance, do some read of a traveller in Egypt, measuring a fallen column with his cane, and finding it exactly five feet

nine inches long ; of his creeping through the mouth of a catacomb, and coming out by a different hole from that he entered ; of his stealing the finger of an antique statue, in spite of the janizary that watched him ; or his adding a new  
5 conjecture to the hundred and fourteen conjectures, already published upon the names of *Osiris* and *Isis*.

Methinks I hear some of my friends in China, demanding a similar account of London and the adjacent villages : and if I remain here much longer, it is probable I may gratify  
10 their curiosity. I intend, when run dry on other topics, to take a serious survey of the City-wall ; to describe that beautiful building the Mansion-house ; I will enumerate the magnificent squares, in which the nobility chiefly reside, and the royal palace appointed for the reception of the English  
15 monarch ; nor will I forget the beauties of Shoe-lane, in which I myself have resided since my arrival. You shall find me no way inferior to many of my brother travellers in the arts of description. At present, however, as a specimen of this way of writing, I send you a few hasty remarks, collected in  
20 a late journey I made to Kentish-town, *and this in the manner of modern voyagers*.

‘ Having heard much of Kentish-town, I conceived a strong desire to see that celebrated place. I could have wished, indeed, to satisfy my curiosity without going thither ; but that  
25 was impracticable, and therefore I resolved to go. Travellers have two methods of going to Kentish-town ; they take coach which costs ninepence, or they go a foot, which costs nothing ; in my opinion, a coach is by far the most eligible convenience, but I was resolved to go on foot, having considered with my-  
30 self, that going in that manner would be the cheapest way.

‘ As you set out from Dog-house Bar, you enter upon a fine levelled road, railed in on both sides, commanding on the right a fine prospect of groves, and fields enamelled with flowers,

which would wonderfully charm the sense of smelling, were it not for a dunghill on the left, which mixes its effluvia with their odours. This dunghill is of much greater antiquity than the road ; and I must not omit a piece of injustice I was going to commit upon this occasion. My indignation was levelled against the makers of the dunghill, for having brought it so near the road, whereas, it should have fallen upon the makers of the road, for having brought that so near the dunghill.

‘ After proceeding in this manner for some time, a building resembling somewhat a triumphal arch salutes the traveller’s view. This structure, however, is peculiar to this country, and vulgarly called a turnpike gate : I could perceive a long inscription in large characters on the front, probably upon the occasion of some triumph, but being in haste, I left it to be made out by some subsequent adventurer, who may happen to travel this way ; so continuing my course to the west, I soon arrived at an unwall’d town called Islington.

‘ Islington is a pretty neat town, mostly built of brick, with a church and bells. It has a small lake or rather pond in the midst ; though at present very much neglected. I am told it is dry in summer ; if this be the case, it can be no very proper receptacle for fish, of which the inhabitants themselves seem sensible, by bringing all that is eaten there from London.

‘ After having surveyed the curiosities of this fair and beautiful town, I proceeded forward, leaving a fair stone building called the White Conduit House on my right ; here the inhabitants of London often assemble to celebrate a feast of hot rolls and butter ; seeing such numbers, each with their little tables before them, employed on this occasion, must no doubt be a very amusing sight to the looker on, but still more so to those who perform in the solemnity.

' From hence I parted with reluctance to *Pancrass* as it is written, or *Pancridge* as it is pronounced ; but which should be both pronounced and written *Pangrace*. This emendation I will venture meo arbitrio ; *ἡ ἅν* in the Greek language signifies  
5 *all*, which added to the English word *grace*, maketh *all grace*, or *Pangrace*, and indeed this is a very proper appellation to a place of so much sanctity, as Pangrace is universally esteemed. However this be, if you except the parish church and its fine bells, there is little in Pangrace worth the attention of  
10 the curious observer.

' From Pangrace to Kentish-town is an easy journey of one mile and a quarter. The road lies through a fine champaign country, well watered with beautiful drains, and enamelled with flowers of all kinds, which might contribute to charm  
15 every sense, were it not that the odoriferous gales are often more impregnated with dust than perfume.

' As you enter Kentish-town, the eye is at once presented with the shops of artificers, such as vendors of candles, small coal, and hair-brooms ; there are also several august build-  
20 ings of red brick, with numberless sign-posts, or rather pillars, in a peculiar order of architecture ; I send you a drawing of several, vide A. B. C. This pretty town probably borrows its name from its vicinity to the county of Kent ; and indeed it is not unnatural that it should, as there are only  
25 London and the adjacent villages that lie between them. Be this as it will, perceiving night approach, I made a hasty repast on roasted mutton, and a certain dried fruit called potatoes, resolving to protract my remarks upon my return ; and this I would very willingly have done ; but was prevented  
30 by a circumstance which in truth I had for some time foreseen, for night coming on, it was impossible to take a proper survey of the country, as I was to return home in the dark.'

Adieu.



## LIII

Letter CXXIII.—*To the same.*

AFTER a variety of disappointments, my wishes are at length fully satisfied. My son, so long expected, is arrived, at once, by his presence, banishing my anxiety, and opening a new scene of unexpected pleasure. His improvements in mind and person have far surpassed even the sanguine expectations of a father. I left him a boy, but he is returned a man ; pleasing in his person, hardened by travel, and polished by adversity. His disappointment in love, however, had infused an air of melancholy into his conversation, which seemed at intervals to interrupt our mutual satisfaction. I expected that this could find a cure only from time ; but Fortune, as if willing to load us with her favours, has, in a moment, repaid every uneasiness with rapture.

Two days after his arrival, the man in black, with his beautiful niece, came to congratulate us upon this occasion ; but guess our surprise, when my friend's lovely kinswoman was found to be the very captive my son had rescued from Persia, and who had been wrecked on the Wolga, and was carried by the Russian peasants to the port of Archangel. Were I to hold the pen of a novelist, I might be prolix in describing their feelings at so unexpected an interview ; but you may conceive their joy, without my assistance ; words were unable to express their transports, then how can words describe it ?

When two young persons are sincerely enamoured of each other, nothing can give me such pleasure as seeing them married : whether I know the parties or not, I am happy at thus binding one link more in the universal chain. Nature has, in some measure, formed me for a match-maker, and given me a soul to sympathise with every mode of human felicity.

I instantly, therefore, consulted the man in black, whether we might not crown their mutual wishes by marriage ; his soul seems formed of similar material with mine, he instantly gave his consent, and the next day was appointed for the  
5 solemnisation of their nuptials.

All the acquaintances which I had made since my arrival, were present at this gay solemnity. The little beau was constituted master of the ceremonies, and his wife Mrs. Tibbs conducted the entertainment with proper decorum. The man  
10 in black and the pawnbroker's widow, were very sprightly and tender upon this occasion. The widow was dressed up under the direction of Mrs. Tibbs ; and as for her lover, his face was set off by the assistance of a pig-tail wig, which was lent by the little beau, to fit him for making love with pro-  
15 per formality. The whole company easily perceived, that it would be a double wedding before all was over, and indeed my friend and the widow seemed to make no secret of their passion ; he even called me aside, in order to know my candid opinion, whether I did not think him a little too old to be  
20 married. As for my own part, continued he, I know I am going to play the fool, but all my friends will praise my wisdom, and produce me as the very pattern of discretion to others.

At dinner, every thing seemed to run on with good humour,  
25 harmony, and satisfaction. Every creature in company thought themselves pretty, and every jest was laughed at : the man in black sat next his mistress, helped her plate, chimed her glass, and jogging her knees and her elbow, he whispered something arch in her ear, on which she patted his cheek ;  
30 never was antiquated passion so playful, so harmless, and amusing, as between this reverend couple.

The second course was now called for, and among a variety of other dishes, a fine turkey was placed before the widow,

The Europeans, you know, carve as they eat ; my friend therefore begged his mistress to help him to a part of the turkey. The widow, pleased with an opportunity of shewing her skill in carving, an art, upon which, it seems, she piqued herself, began to cut it up by first taking off the leg. 5 *Madam*, cried my friend, *if I may be permitted to advise, I would begin by cutting off the wing, and then the leg will come off more easily.* Sir, replies the widow, give me leave to understand cutting up a fowl, I always begin with the leg. *Yes, madam*, replies the lover, *but if the wing be the* 10 *most convenient manner, I would begin with the wing.* Sir, interrupts the lady, when you have fowls of your own, begin with the wing if you please ; but give me leave to take off the leg. I hope I am not to be taught at this time of the day. *Madam*, interrupts he, *we are never too old to be* 15 *instructed.* Old, Sir, interrupts the other, who is old, Sir ? when I die of age, I know of some that will quake for fear ; if the leg does not come off, take the turkey to yourself. *Madam*, replied the man in black, *I don't care a farthing whether the leg or the wing comes off ; if you care for the leg* 20 *first, why, you shall have the argument, even though it be as I say.* As for the matter of that, cries the widow, I don't care a fig whether you are for the leg off or on ; and friend, for the future, keep your distance. *O*, replied the other, *that is easily done : it is only moving to the other end of the table,* 25 *and so, madam, your most obedient humble servant.*

Thus was this courtship of an age destroyed in one moment ; for this dialogue effectually broke off the match between this respectable couple, that had been but just concluded. The smallest accidents disappoint the most important 30 treaties. However, though it in some measure interrupted the general satisfaction, it no ways lessened the happiness of the youthful couple ; and by the young lady's looks, I could

perceive she was not entirely displeased with the interruption.

In a few hours the whole transaction seemed entirely forgotten, and we have all since enjoyed those satisfactions which result from a consciousness of making each other happy. My son and his fair partner are fixed here for life ; the man in black has given them up a small estate in the country, which added to what I was able to bestow, will be capable of supplying all the real, but not the fictitious, demands of happiness. As for myself, the world being but one city to me, I don't much care in which of the streets I happen to reside ; I shall therefore spend the remainder of life in examining the manners of different countries, and have prevailed upon the man in black to be my companion. *They must often change, says Confucius, who would be constant in happiness or wisdom.* Adieu.

THE END.



# NOTES

## LETTER I

Goldsmith wished to give a realistic touch to the whole episode, —the visit of the Chinese Philosopher and his letters to his friends in the East. Hence we have this letter of introduction, which is supposed to be written by a merchant in Amsterdam. This merchant is referred to only once more in Letter XXIX, where his good offices are asked for the Wanderer's son, Hingpo. The Letter was originally dated October 21, 1759. We are to understand that the Chinese Philosopher reaches London, with this recommendatory letter, during the last months of the year 1759. As we know, he went forth again on his wanderings in August 1761. His whole stay on the English shores, therefore, extended over less than two years.

The English merchant in Amsterdam informs his friend that the bearer of the letter is his friend who had done him signal service, when he was a mandarin and when the merchant himself was a factor at Canton. To explain the fact that the Chinaman could speak and write English, it is stated here that by frequently conversing with the English there at Canton, he had learned the language. The merchant, however, is careful to add that he is a stranger to the manners and customs of the English. This is the idea of the character. He is to be a philosopher, who brings a wide outlook; but he is to be a stranger to the English manners and customs; and so, his criticism is partly just, and partly irrelevant and off the mark. All this is fiction and

is not very convincing ; neither is it expected to be. It is a thin disguise ; merely a convention, which has to be accepted and is accepted by the readers quite readily.

P. 1, l. 7. *Met with honour* : was honoured ; the payment of the amount of the cheque (or bill) was made.

P. 1, l. 9. *Protested* : a technical term, meaning that a bill has been presented for payment and refused.

P. 1, l. 11. *Signal* : remarkable ; notable.

P. 1, l. 12. *Mandarine* : a European name for a Chinese official, civil or military (compare the Sanskrit word '*Mantrin*', counsellor). It does not mean any particular kind of office.

P. 1, l. 15. *I am told . . . . an honest man* : Note the antithesis. The first statement that he is a philosopher is based on what he learns from others, whereas the fact that he is an honest man is based on his own knowledge : one is a hearsay, the other a personal conviction ; and a personal conviction, as one can easily see, is better than the opinion of others.

P. 1, l. 17. *Next to the consideration* : But the greatest recommendation, in the eyes of his friend, the merchant in London, would be that the Chinaman is the friend of his own friend,—the merchant in Amsterdam.

## LETTER II

In the *Public Ledger*, this second letter was published, along with the first, on the same day, viz. January 24th 1760. With this letter begin the Chinaman's comments on English life and customs. Both the letters were published together, because, without the second letter, the first letter would have no meaning to the readers of the *Public Ledger*.

The letters are generally addressed to Fum Hoam of Pekin or to the Chinaman's son Hingpo. They are forwarded through the Amsterdam merchant and a certain Fipsihi of Moscow. The Editor, Goldsmith, is supposed to have translated the whole correspondence. In this letter, we first notice the pompous eastern style which is marked by fantastic and abundant metaphors. The reader immediately perceives that the style is un-

English ; and so, the fiction of a Chinese, writing English, is subtly kept up. It adds a grace, when it is thus occasionally exploited. But if it were carried too far, or too consistently, it would have been tedious.

In the first four paragraphs, the Chinaman, in the peculiarly Eastern style of courtly sentiment, pays compliments in return to his friend in Amsterdam for his eulogistic commendatory note, and returns the money secretly sent with him for his own use. All this introductory part is not so very interesting in itself, but is more or less necessary to keep up the fiction.

Then the Chinaman describes his passage by sea from Rotterdam to England. The English reader naturally laughs at the Chinaman for his exaggerated anxiety and his compliments to the English for their mastery of the sea. Thus, by a good-humoured laugh at the Chinese philosopher, the sympathy of the reader is secured at the outset.

The Chinaman then remarks how he was disappointed on entering London to see no signs of that opulence so much talked of abroad. The contrast between a Chinese town and London is natural, and is worked out to the detriment of London. Wherever the Chinaman turns, he is presented with a gloomy solemnity in the houses, the streets and the inhabitants. "The streets of Nankin"—a Chinese town—"are sometimes strewed with gold leaf ; very different are those of London ; in the midst of their pavement, a great lazy puddle, moves muddily along". Another point of his comment is the sign-boards hanging from many houses, so often the subject of the raillery of the essayists. The Chinaman remarks that they are paltry, and are at once a proof of the Englishman's poverty and vanity. The painters are ridiculed for the poverty of their ideas and for their fantastic representations. The Chinaman finally concludes that there is not a poorer nation than the English under the sun. Of course, he admits that he has been in London only for two days, and so he would not be hasty in his judgment. (This is a gesture to the reader to take his criticism in a lighter mood.)

P. 2, l. 5. *May the wings of peace . . .* Note this first sentence as an example of the supposed Eastern style of writing ; the wings of peace, the shield of conscience, are not implied, but

obtrusively worked out. In good English, we have these metaphors, but they are often implied, and are not worked out, as they are very commonplace or hackneyed.

P. 2, l. 8. *Fortune is resolved* . . . . In plain English it means he is uneasy at the thought that he cannot make an adequate return for the good offices of his friends; he has only sincere words of thanks for them.

P. 2, l. 12. *delicacy* : consideration for others' feelings.

P. 2, l. 15. *To impute to your justice* . . . . you want to suggest that what you did for me was mere justice, whereas it was really due to your generosity. There is not much credit for an action, if it is an outcome of a sense of justice; but if it is prompted by generosity, it is valued highly. The Merchant would try to take little credit to himself; while the philosopher would give him great credit for his generosity in helping him. So, what to the Merchant is an act of mere justice, is to the Chinese philosopher an act of generosity.

P. 2, l. 21. *Sanguine* : ardent, hopeful, warm.

P. 2, l. 26. *You can find pleasure* : The philosopher and the Merchant are thus contrasted in their attitude to wealth. Note the *antithesis*.

P. 2, l. 29. *even though you have etc.* : superfluous though it may be to you.

P. 3, l. 1. *My passage by sea* . . . . The English Channel is always rough to cross. But to the Chinaman, who is supposed to be only a landsman, the passage is a sore trial. The English reader cannot help laughing at the high-flown style in which the Chinaman expresses his feeling of terror and wonder.

P. 3, l. 13. *cordage* : cords, rope &c. in the rigging of a ship.

P. 3, l. 20. *What a strange people* . . . . The Chinaman compliments the English in this strange way, because they have founded an empire over the sea and built "cities upon the billows." It appears that here the tall English ships are referred to. These ships appear to rise higher than the mountains of Tipertala.

P. 3, l. 22. *build cities* : the cities are, of course, the big ships.

P. 3, l. 23. *The mountains of Tipartala* : Possibly an imaginary mountain.



P. 3, l. 24. *Make the deep* : The English ships render the ocean more formidable than the tempest. One can weather the tempest, but not the English ships. So formidable they are to their enemies.

P. 3, l. 32. *None of that beautiful gilding* : The streets of China are narrow and spanned at intervals by ornamental gateways or arches, flimsy in structure, but resplendent with paint and gilding ; even the shop-signs are decorated with lavish ornamentation, varnished and covered with gold-leaf, while their palaces and temples blaze with glazed tiles.

P. 4, l. 2. *Those of London* : "The streets of London," says the Chinaman, "were obstructed with stalls, shades, sign-posts, and projections of various kinds ; and each inhabitant paved the front of his own door in such a manner and with such materials as pride, poverty, or caprice might suggest."

P. 4, l. 3. *a great lazy puddle . . . along* : Large puddles are formed in the pavement, and their muddy waters flow very slowly across the streets.

P. 4, l. 4. *Machines* : road carriages ; large waggons carrying goods.

P. 4, l. 8. *The houses etc.* : The houses have almost no ornaments of architectural beauties !

P. 4, l. 9. *A paltry piece of painting* : "The shops of London have a picture hung at their doors or windows informing the passers-by what they have to sell." Addison, too, wrote in the *Spectator*, No. 28 : "Our streets are filled with blue boars, black swans, and red lions ; not to mention flying pigs and hogs in armour."

P. 4, l. 12. *Indigence* : Poverty.

P. 4, l. 15. *I have seen five black lions* : Lions are never black, nor are boars ever blue. Yet many painters painted them in colours they never have in actual life. This shows lack of sense in them ; it also shows lack of variety.

P. 4, l. 17. *Animals of these colours* : The Chinese philosopher assumes the pose of a realist and considers that the painters are wrong in painting these fantastic animals which exist nowhere in nature, but only in the wild imagination of these painters or people in general,

P. 4, l. 22. *The proverb of Xixosou* : Perhaps an imaginary name, meant merely to impose on the reader.

P. 4, l. 23. *A man's riches may be seen in his eyes* : the meaning is not clear. Perhaps, Goldsmith meant to say that a man's riches may be seen in those things which he displays to the public eye. A rich man is one who makes a brave show. Hidden riches are no riches. The meaning is made fairly clear by the next sentence where it is said that, judged by this rule, 'there is not a poorer nation under the sun.'

### LETTER III

To keep up the pose of realism, we have in this letter, a delightful satire of some of the external aspects only, such as strike a man on a superficial acquaintance of three days,—a satire on the affectations only—the vanities of wig, powder and patch—and not on the sacred customs nor the real life of the people.

Though not a very remarkable letter in itself, it deserves careful study. In the introductory remarks, the Chinaman tells his friend, Fum Hoam, how he gazes at the strangers in London and how they at him. They find something absurd in his figure, and he, too, would have found much that was ridiculous in them. But he is taught by his experience to laugh at folly alone. Very wisely and with many concrete illustrations, he remarks that the ridiculous lies not in others but in him, who falsely condemns others for absurdity, because they happen to differ from a standard originally founded in prejudice or partiality. Then he observes that every extravagance, in dress, proceeds from a desire to make oneself more beautiful than nature has made us. And this is a harmless vanity. This vanity leads to much social good. For, thousands subsist on the harmless pride of each other. "Your nose-borers, feet-swathers, teeth-strainers, eye-brow-pluckers, would all want bread, should their neighbours want vanity." These vanities are far more common in England than in China. A fine gentleman or a fine lady, dressed up to the fashion, would really require the help of many trades for her make-up.

To make a fine gentleman, several trades are required, but chiefly a barber (It is not the tailor that makes a gentleman, but

a barber !). Like Samson, the English seem to place all their wisdom in their hair ! " To appear wise, nothing more is requisite here than for a man to borrow hair from the heads of all his neighbours, and cap it like a bush on his own." Thus the Chinaman comments on the gentleman's fashion of wearing wigs. In the same strain, he goes on to satirise the affectations of the ladies. " She is herself every whit as fond of powder and tails and hog's-lard as he." In a delightful passage, he writes, " to speak my secret sentiments, my reverend Fum, the ladies here are horribly ugly " ; for, as he points out, his standard is the Chinese beauty. In China small feet, a broad face, a sharp nose and little eyes are marks of female beauty. But here the English women are entirely different ! " They have such masculine feet, as actually serve *some* for walking." Here, however, the English reader enjoys a hearty laugh at the expense of the Chinese philosopher. Instead of agreeing with him that the ladies here, in England, are horribly ugly, he knows that they are really beautiful ; and the more horrible they appear in the eyes of the Chinese philosopher, the more beautiful they are. Thus, after securing the good opinion of the ladies by this indirect compliment, he goes on now to satirise them for the use of powder and patches. ' Most ladies here,' he is told, ' have two faces : one face to sleep in and another to show in company ! The first is often indifferent enough, but the out-door one looks something better and it is always made at the toilet '. The essay concludes with a striking remark : the Chinaman tells his friend that the ladies wear more clothes within doors than without, and that he has seen a lady who seemed to shudder at a breeze in her own apartment, appear half-naked in the streets !

P. 5, l. 11. *By every remove* : Goldsmith expresses the same thought in his *Traveller*, line 10, ' And drags at each remove a lengthening Chain '. The plain meaning is that the farther he goes the more does he feel the strength of his love for his native land. The strength of attachment and the pain of separation are signified by the length of the chain.

Critics notice that Goldsmith often repeats his thoughts and images, which show the limited range of his mind.

P. 5, l. 24. *When I have ceased to wonder* : When the first feeling of wonder would wear off, as I grow more familiar with men and things. As long as mere curiosity (i.e. ' wonder ') pre-

vails, reason cannot work. Hence the Chinaman says that he may grow wiser, when he has ceased to wonder. Now-a-days, we rather maintain that the true poet should retain this feeling of wonder even to the end of his days, and we blame science for destroying this sense of wonder. This change is not due to any difference in attitude, but to the change in the meaning of the word 'wonder'. Goldsmith uses it in the sense of vulgar curiosity, gaping wonder, and not the higher feeling of wonder in the presence of the unknown.

P. 6, l. 4. *The Chinese Wall* : The famous great wall, built in 200 B.C., against the invasions of the Tartars ; it girds for fifteen hundred miles the western frontier of China.

P. 6, l. 6. *Tonguese etc.* : The Daures may be identified with the present inhabitants of Mongolia ; the Calmucks may be identified with the people north of the Caspian, about the mouth of the Volga. Both tribes, together with the Tonguese, were Tartars.

P. 6, l. 7. *contain* : contain my laughter ; I could, with great difficulty, keep myself from bursting into laughter.

P. 6, l. 11. *Ridicule lay not etc.* : Laughter is due to the perception of incongruity. Whenever one notices any incongruity, one's reaction to it is laughter. But the standard, by which the incongruity is measured or felt, is a personal standard, a subjective one. That is why some things appear ridiculous to one man but not to others. As the Chinese philosopher says, the element of ridicule lay in himself, and not objectively in the foreigners. His own standard, so to say, was based on prejudice or partiality. That is, he looked upon the Chinese standard as the absolute, natural standard, and hence laughed at those things which went against the Chinese standard. But those things are as much natural as the Chinese, and so, they are not necessarily incongruous.

P. 6, l. 15. *taxing the English with* : finding fault with the English for.

P. 6, l. 18. *Every extravagance in dress etc.* : The remark of Goldsmith is, indeed, striking, and points in the right direction. Every extravagance of fashion is shown to be a mistaken pursuit of the beautiful. Goldsmith's comments on the social effects of luxury and vanity are interesting, and contain a substantial element of truth.



P. 6, l. 23. *appetites*, desires.

P. 6, l. 24. *inveigh against*, attack with angry words ; speak violently against.

P. 6, l. 27. *Your nose-borers* : The nose-borers have, indeed, no occupation in China ! Goldsmith has thus made a slight slip here. The nose-borers are required among the savages—and even here in India !

P. 6, l. 27. *Feet-swathers* : This custom has been prevailing for a long time in China. At the age of five or six, the feet of the female child are tightly bandaged, the four small toes being doubled under the sole, and the heel brought forward. The fashion may be an outcome of a 'desire to accentuate the fact of gentility by rendering bodily labour impossible.' *To swathe*, to enclose in wraps or bandages.

P. 6, l. 28. *Tooth-stainers* : The savages of Malaya dye their teeth black, but not the Chinese.

P. 6, l. 28. *Would all want bread* : Would not find any means of livelihood, if their skill in these professions is not required ; if these professions were to be closed, because there is no longer any vanity which calls for them.

P. 7, l. 2. *Jewish champion, viz* : Samson Agonistes whose strength lay in his hair. How delightfully absurd this remark about the English custom of wearing wigs appears. For the Englishmen wore wigs, not really because, like Samson, they believed that their wisdom or strength lay in their hair, but merely because it was a fashion of the time. How ridiculous it is to suppose that wisdom lies in hair and that, too, the hair of others ! If so, wisdom could be purchased by quantities. The reader laughs also at the Chinaman, because he has misunderstood the nature of the fashion.

P. 7, l. 6. *To borrow hair* : Wigs were, till the time of Louis XIII, worn only to supply natural defect. But Louis XIII of France inaugurated the fashion of wearing the wigs, and it became common in England under Charles II, and in Queen Anne's reign, it became universal. At the time, when the Chinese Letters were written (1760), wigs and cocked hats were worn even by school-boys ; but men of fashion had already begun to dress and powder their own hair. During the early years of George III, the fashion

declined rapidly. About 1785, men wore their hair tied in a queue and women theirs, in ringlets.

P. 7, l. 7. *The distributors of law and physics* : Lawyers and doctors. The quaint phraseology of the Chinese thus causes some pleasant surprise when familiar names are thus expressed in a roundabout way.

P. 7, l. 14. *Meal* : flour.

P. 7, l. 14. *Hog's lard* : clarified fat of the abdomen of pigs, used as pomade.

P. 7, l. 21. '*betailed, bepowdered*' : Note how Goldsmith coins verbs from the nouns, 'tail' and 'powder'.

P. 7, l. 21. *man of taste* : a man possessed of the faculty of discerning and enjoying beauty, especially in art and literature.

P. 7, l. 22. *hard-featured*, having ugly features ; of repulsive looks.

P. 7, l. 23. *hideously tender* : Ugly features, when sought to be softened by the toilette, become all the more frightful and repulsive.

P. 7, l. 25. *hopes for success etc.* : hopes to win the love of the lady by external make-up rather than by genuine ardour of passion.

P. 8, l. 3. *have eyes for* : be able to appreciate.

P. 8, l. 5. *Nenfew* : Nankangfew, in the south-west of Honan—Altangi's native province.

P. 8, l. 9. *pencil of Quamsi* : Quamsi a great Chinese painter ; perhaps imaginary.

P. 8, l. 14. *And then they have etc* : The Chinese philosopher expresses his horror at the feet of the English women. To him, with his standard of Chinese feet, the feet of the English ladies appear masculine. And he is shocked to find that some of them make use of their feet even for walking ! That a lady should walk, appears to a Chinese, vulgar and undignified for her rank. The point of the remark is subtle, and the satire is double-edged. Whatever a Chinaman may feel, we do think that a lady loses none of her dignity by walking. The use of the word 'some' in italics shows that the satire is directed against many ladies who affect delicacy and would not walk with their own legs.

P. 8, l. 16. *yet uncivil as nature etc.* : i.e. naturally ugly as they are, they make themselves horrid by their peculiar toilet.

P. 8, l. 17. *Powder* : Cosmetics and white powder for the face are not unknown to the ladies of China.

P. 8, l. 18. *Black patches* : This fashion was doubtless inaugurated to cover a natural defect. In the reign of Anne, the position of the patch varied sometimes with the politics of the wearer.

P. 8, l. 22. *Except on the tip of the nose* : Goldsmith mischievously remarks, that no lady would ever put a patch on the tip of the nose. Such a patch would disfigure the face. (When a man is drunk, the tip of his nose becomes red ; and so no lady would suggest such a thing—that she was dead drunk—by a patch on the tip of the nose).

P. 8, l. 33. *Indifferent* : Neither good nor bad.

P. 8, l. 33. *indifferent enough* : rather bad ; far from good-looking.

P. 9, l. 3. *Toad-eater . . . . day* : It means here the lady's maid who, with the looking glass, sitting in council, settles the complexion of the day.

P. 9, l. 3. *toad-eater* : generally means a low flatterer ; a sycophant ; here it means the lady's maid.

P. 9, l. 6. *Who seemed to shudder at a breeze* : This shows how cold it was, and yet when the lady came out, she did not put on more clothes to protect herself from cold, but went half-naked to display her charms to the gazers in the street !

#### LETTER IV

The Chinaman now characterises the Englishman and points out that pride, individual and natural, is an outstanding trait of the Englishman. Englishmen are proud of their liberty and are ready to sacrifice their life for it. But very few of them know what liberty really is. A very clever dialogue brings out this situation very skilfully. Indeed, the satire here reaches a high level. It is not a satire on liberty, but a satire on these who profess love of liberty without knowing its true meaning. It is a satire on the empty professions of liberty or love of freedom.

The Chinese philosopher hears a conversation between a debtor, (through the grate of his prison), a porter who has stopped to rest his burden, and a soldier at the window. The subject of their conversation was a threatened invasion from France,

which filled all with an anxiety to rescue their country from the impending danger.

"For my part," cries the prisoner, "the greatest of my apprehensions is *for our freedom*. Liberty is the Englishman's prerogative; we must preserve that at the expense of our lives." How ironic this high-sounding sentiment appears in the mouth of one who has lost his freedom! He calls the French slaves and says that they would not care for English freedom if they were to conquer England. The porter heartily agrees with him. "Ay, slaves, they are all slaves, *fit only to carry burdens*, every one of them." Once more we realise the irony of the situation. That a porter, himself a slave of burden, should call the French "slaves fit only to carry burdens," marks the height of absurdity. But the porter himself, is unaware of any such incongruity, and drinks the cup with a curse to the French. The soldier cries out. "It is not so much our liberties, *as our religion*, that would suffer by such a change; ay, our religion, my lads! May the devil sink me into the flames, if the French should come over, but our religion would be entirely undone." Once more, the very profanity of the loud oath is an ironic dig at the so-called religious sentiment of the speaker.

Then the Chinaman goes on to point out that even women take part in politics and win the hearts of men by their political opinions more than by their beauty. Then he goes on to comment on the newspapers and how they are written by ignorant persons who seem to get all their news or opinions from worthless sources. Lastly, one more prominent trait of the English is referred to. They seem fonder of gaining the esteem than the love of those they converse with. It may appear strange, but the fact is that the English are polite, and not haughty. 'Their great art in this respect lies in endeavouring, while they oblige, to lessen the force of the favour. Whereas others, in obliging a stranger, 'seem desirous that the stranger should be sensible of the obligation, the English confer their kindness with an appearance of indifference and give away benefits as if they despised them.' Thus when it was raining, the Englishman offered his rain-coat to the Chinaman, as if he did not want it himself, whereas his French friend showed his politeness by saying how good the coat was and that he would not part with it except to such



a friend as he. The Chinaman concludes with the observation that 'the volume of Nature is a book of knowledge, and he, who reads it judiciously, becomes wise.'

Thus, in the latter half of the essay, we have a remarkable instance which brings out another important trait of English. They would confer obligations with an appearance of indifference. A concrete illustration presenting a delightful contrast drives the point home. But for the fact that the two points in the essay are not organically connected, it would have been one of the best essays; as it is, these two parts separately are among the very best of Goldsmith.

P. 9, l. 15. *Conciliate* : to gain the love or good-will of such as have been indifferent or hostile.

P. 9, l. 23. *Pride seems the source, etc.* : Virtues, which are peculiar to the English as a nation, spring from pride, just as their national vices do.

P. 9, l. 26. *the laws which he himself, etc.* : a reference to the parliamentary government of England.

P. 9, l. 27. *Those nations* : Where the king has all the power and is absolute, and his subjects are, so to say, slaves of the tyrant.

P. 10, l. 5. *Traces his ancestry* : The Chinese are very prodigal in their titular respect for royalty. "Sun of Heaven" and "The Imperial Supreme" are among the dignities lavished upon their absolute monarch.

P. 10, l. 11. *A threatened invasion from France* : During the Seven Years' War (1756-63), then raging on the continent, the public mind was intermittently racked with groundless terrors of a French invasion.

P. 10, l. 17. *prerogative* : a natural or divine right or privilege.

P. 10, l. 25. *list for* : enlist myself as; become a soldier, take up arms in defence of my country.

P. 10, l. 29. *May the devil etc.* : A more or less literal rendering of the common form of oath—Damn me!

P. 10, l. 30. *solemnity of his adjuration* : notice the irony.

P. 10, l. 13. *adjuration* : oath, charging a person with the penalty of a curse.

P. 10, l. 32. *Libation* : The pouring forth of wine or other liquid in honour of a deity; a drink-offering to God.

P. 11, l. 1. *confirmed, etc.* : proved his sincerity by a solemn action testifying his unswerving devotion to the cause of his country.

P. 11, l. 3. *pretends to* : professes (falsely) to.

P. 11, l. 4. *mix the severity of national love* : engage in the political controversies of the day, taking sides with those whom they court, that they may succeed in love.

P. 11, l. 5. *Altercation* : controversy.

P. 11, l. 6. *often become conquerors . . . . eyes* : often win the hearts of men more by the adoption of particular political opinions than by their personal charms.

P. 11, l. 14. *Oracle* : A person famed for wisdom. *Oracle* originally signified a place (particularly, Delphi), at which ancient Greeks used to consult their deities for prophecy or advice. *The Oracle of some coffee-houses*, some person presiding over a coffee-house, where current politics, social event, literature were talked of and discussed. In the days of Goldsmith, coffee-houses (something like modern restaurants) were centres where politicians and learned men met regularly to discuss current political and literary topics.

P. 12, l. 22. *The Volume of Nature* : A common metaphor. We learn knowledge from the book of Nature, i.e. by studying Nature and life generally. All knowledge lies open before us as in a volume, and hence a judicious selection has to be made to gather wisdom.

## LETTER V

Here we have a letter from Fum Hoam, the friend and teacher of Altangi. As befitting the superior person, Fum Hoam reads a lecture to Altangi on his insatiable thirst after knowledge. He informs him that his departure from China has brought a calamity on his family and that his son Hingpo is bent upon starting in search of his father. Thus the letter serves as an introduction to the romantic episode of Hingpo—the second story in the framework.

As coming from a Chinese without foreign culture, the style is markedly oriental. The theory maintained in it by Fum Hoam

is that exclusive pursuit of intellectual pleasure is not good. A golden mean between sensual pleasure and purely intellectual pleasure must be sought. A wandering philosopher like Altangi appears to Fum Hoam to neglect his responsibilities to his family and friends, in his pursuit of pure intellectual pleasures. Hence he states a theory of his own that even intellectual pleasures have their springs in the satisfaction of the senses. If this connection is entirely cut off, the resulting intellectual pleasure is fit for a fool, or for an eccentric person. We need not seriously criticise this view as it is a sort of special pleading. Fum Hoam wants to reproach Altangi—wants to warn him against pursuing his vain quest of knowledge. This introduction prepares Altangi for the shocking news of the disaster that has befallen his family, and is an illustration of the evil effects of his pursuit.

P. 12, l. 28. *Irtis* : The river Irtis is a tributary of the Ob in Siberia.

P. 12, l. 30. *Kobi-Gobi* : a desert north of China.

P. 12, l. 30. *Giving lessons etc.* : Chinese civilization being very ancient, Altangi is supposed to give lessons in good manners and politeness to the Europeans, who are thought to be barbarians and whose civilization is a thing only of yesterday.

P. 13, l. 2. *Tien, the universal soul* : The worship of Wang Teen ('Tien') or Shang-te represents the universal soul. Shang-te is the Chinese name for God.

P. 13, l. 6. *Connexions* : Ties of home and friendship.

P. 13, l. 8. *Inconveniences of a crowd* : Always being oppressed with the feeling of being lonely in the midst of foreigners, and therefore craving for solitude.

P. 13, l. 10. *The refined pleasure etc.* : Purely intellectual pleasure is a sufficient reward for all sorts of discomforts in travelling.

P. 13, l. 14. *Sentimental bliss* : Pleasure arising from purely intellectual pursuit. Here distinction is made between sentimental bliss and sensual enjoyment. The first springs from purely intellectual sentiments while the second springs from the gratification of the senses. The latter consists in the satisfaction of the senses whereas the former in the satisfaction of intellect or reason. Intellectual pleasure is refined, while the sensual pleasure is coarse.

P. 13, l. 17. *The most exquisite demonstration etc.* : Here Fum Hoam states and elaborates his own theory of pleasure. He maintains that pleasure, however intellectual, is independent of the senses. The two are inseparable. The pleasure afforded by an intellectual demonstration or a discussion of an abstract philosophical problem may be said to be intellectual. Only fools, or men who by long habit have formed a false idea of pleasure, can enjoy a pleasure that is dissociated from that of the senses. He who seeks happiness from the mind alone is as miserable as a barbarian whose happiness lies in the gratification of the senses. These are the two extremes. A rational being should avoid both. He should balance the two in his schemes of life. Fum Hoam thus wants Altangi to be mindful of his home, family, and property, while he seeks pleasure from wisdom gathered in travels.

P. 13, l. 18. *disquisition* : a carefully thought out (elaborate) discourse or treatise on the first principles of being and knowing.

P. 13, l. 26. *The savage etc.* : The savage goes to one extreme, and the wise man to the other. The first snatches at the pleasure of the senses without any consciousness of pleasure. In the second it is consciousness that heightens the pleasure. The difference between the pleasure of a philosopher and that of the savage is that the one is conscious of it, while the other is not. Both of them may perhaps feel the animal pleasure to the same degree. But the philosopher adds something exquisite—this consciousness—to the animal pleasure, whereas the savage does not transcend the animal pleasure. His pleasure begins and ends in itself.

P. 14, l. 17. *Want of prudence . . . etc.* : Altangi's disregard of all worldly or material considerations is carried to the extreme, and therefore, Fum Hoam thinks that Altangi lacks in prudence. Prudence is a virtue. Altangi had already been thrown into poverty by his own imprudence ; and poverty itself very often degrades people and brings them to vice. So he is asked to beware of both.

## LETTER VI

This letter, describing a part of the journey from China to Moscow, is not only interesting in itself, but it is interesting



for 'local' colour and also for the light it throws in Goldsmith's thought. Everything that he sees sets him thinking, as it should a philosopher that Altangi is supposed to be. In the eighteenth century, there was a controversy about Nature and reason. What is nature? Is everything that is natural, good? Are men rational? These and other questions were often discussed. Goldsmith in this essay offers a few concrete illustrations to enable us to see the nature of the problem clearly.

First he points out that there were constant wars between the Tartars and the Chinese, and these wars brought about great ruin and devastation. And he concludes with the observation that the cruelty and pride of man have made more deserts than Nature ever made. Nature is kind but man is ungrateful. This sentiment of Goldsmith reminds us of the well-known words of Wordsworth :

' And much it grieved my heart to think  
What man has made of man.'

Then he turns to make some observations on the Daures,—an ancient Tartar tribe. The observations are all interesting as well as profound ; for instance, he notes that custom and necessity teach even the barbarians the same art of dissimulation that ambition and intrigue inspire in the breast of the polite? " In every country, my friend, the Bonzes, the Brahmins, and the priests deceive the people." " The priests point us out the way to Heaven with their fingers but stand still themselves, nor seem to travel towards the country in view." This, too, remind us of the words of Ophelia to Laertes :

" Do not, as some ungracious pastors do  
Show me the steep and thorny way to Heaven ; . . .  
Himself the primrose-path of dalliance treads  
And recks not his own rede".

The customs and the religion of the Daures are all absurd, irrational. Hence, he very passionately asks, with reference to their absurd customs, whether men are rational at all. One more profound observation is that ' fear guides men more to their duty than gratitude ; fear is the root cause of duty and allegiance, in the case of the majority of men. ' For one man who is virtuous

from the love of virtue, . . . . . there are ten thousand who are good only from their apprehensions of punishment.'

P. 14, l. 27. *Nature sports in primeval rudeness* : that is, where Nature has her own way without being checked by civilization or the arts of man.

P. 14, l. 29. *Drifted desert* : desert formed of heaps of sand driven by the wind.

P. 15, l. 2. *Himself more hideous etc.* : he is more dreadful than the scene of desolation brought about by himself.

P. 15, l. 6. *The retreat of men etc.* : The Tartars and other bandits seem to be the outcasts of society. They seem to be making war, from this place of retreat, on humanity which has driven them away.

P. 15, l. 8. *Moscovy* : Russia.

P. 15, l. 10. *The great wall* : The great Chinese wall was built as a protection against the Tartar invasions.

P. 15, l. 29. *pensive scene* : a scene, beautiful yet desolate, giving rise to sad reflection.

P. 16, l. 4. *Custom and necessity* : Force of circumstance and necessity have taught even these barbarians to hide their feelings and play the hypocrite, whereas the civilised men learn this art, because they are always scheming in the pursuit of their ambitious designs.

P. 16, l. 7. *Unlicensed etc.* : uncontrolled exercise of power ; oppression.

P. 16, l. 12. *Hope of impunity* : When a man has hopes that he would not be punished, he is strongly tempted to commit acts of violation. Governors and other officers are checked in their acts of rapacity by the fear that they may be punished later on. But if they hope to go scot-free, nothing will check them.

P. 16, l. 15. *Sectaries of Fohi* : Fohi is the Chinese Buddha, the sectaries are the Buddhists. The orthodox religion of China is, of course, Confucianism.

P. 16, l. 16. *Confucius* : Kung-Futz (Confucius) lived between the years 550 and 478 B.C. In the days of Feudal anarchy, he attempted the moral and political regeneration of China ; but during his own life-time, he failed. He had gathered disciples

to the number of 3000, and taught them "the Rule of Life", and the simple duties of man to man. He recognised in Hwing-Teen the "one intelligent cause of all."

P. 16, l. 19. *His boasted reason seems only to lead him astray* : a striking thought, very finely expressed. Man boasts of his reason, but it seems to point out to him a wrong path, and leads him astray, with its false light, though we expect it to show the true way by its light.

P. 16, l. 29. *Miscalled music* : To call that horrible noise music is to misuse words.

P. 16, l. 31. *inspiring daemon* : the demon, supposed to infuse itself into the body of the priest. *Daemon*, an inferior deity, generally cruel and malignant.

P. 16, l. 31. *pretends to skill in futurity* : claims to have the power of foretelling the future.

P. 16, l. 33. *bonzes* : Chinese Buddhist priests. *Brachmans* : Brahmins.

P. 17, l. 19. *apes of Borneo* : Borneo, the largest of the East Indies, a large group of islands, lying along the Equator, between Asia and Australia. Borneo is still undeveloped and mostly covered with dense forests. There is, I think, no speciality about the apes of Borneo. They are referred to, as a convenient, picturesque detail.

P. 17, l. 29. *Epicureans* : The followers of Epicurus. People who sought pleasure throughout their lives. Epicurus was an Athenian philosopher who lived in 3rd century B.C. He taught that the highest good which men should seek after is pleasure.

P. 17, l. 30. *heaven had no thunders* : God could not punish the wicked and the vicious.

## LETTER VII

The letter is remarkable for Goldsmith's insight and originality of thought. Goldsmith here propounds the view that to luxury, we owe not only most of our knowledge, but even many of our virtues. It shows his originality and independence of mind. He would not be led away by the conventional or current opinions, but would test them in the light of his own experience and



his ideas. It is this quality that makes his essays even on such commonplace themes like luxury so refreshing and interesting to read. Whether we agree with him or not, we are forced to treat his observations with deference.

The Chinaman remarks that every sphere of life has vices peculiar to itself. Perfidy and fraud are the vices of civilised nations, credulity and violence those of the inhabitants of the desert. He then shows that we owe to luxury not only the greatest part of our knowledge but even of our virtues.

He first points out that we should not think of merely leading a life satisfied with bare necessities. There is surely a greater and higher happiness in continually increasing our wants and in satisfying them. 'It is only in the train of luxury that poets, philosophers and even patriots are seen marching. Only when knowledge seems to contribute to happiness, do we pursue it. We desire to know what we desire to possess and enjoy. Luxury lends the spur to curiosity, and generates in us a desire of becoming wiser.' [This is, however, not the whole truth. There is in man a desire for disinterested knowledge, though happiness or luxury may, in the earlier stages of civilisation, be an incentive to progress].

The Chinaman shows that the civilised nations alone show the virtue of pity, of loving even their enemies, as the English did recently, when they tried to save their own enemies whom their own countrymen refused to relieve. Again, a man who cares for luxury has to depend on others, and thus there arises a greater sense of solidarity. Luxury is the child of society alone. So, judged from any point of view, luxury is a worthy object of pursuit. For, we should enjoy as many luxuries of life as are consistent with virtue and well-being. He, who finds out a new pleasure, is a great benefactor of society.

P. 18, l. 7. *Dissimulation* : Hypocrisy, hiding one's feelings or opinions under a false appearance.

P. 18, l. 11. *Perfidy* : Treachery, faithlessness.

P. 18, l. 22. *Appetite* : Physical craving ; natural desire such as hunger, thirst, sex.

P. 18, l. 27. *Obviating* : Meeting on the way, hence anticipating and removing difficulties, etc.



P. 18, l. 28. *Encrease* : is an obsolete form of 'increase'. Students should write 'increase' and not 'encrease'.

P. 19, l. 6. *Parallax* : a term in Astronomy—the difference between the apparent and the real place of a star or other celestial object.

P. 19, l. 19. *Promegranate* is a misprint ; it should be pomegranate, which is known as Dālimba in Marathi.

P. 20, l. 2. *Abstemious* : temperate, sparing in food, drink or enjoyments.

P. 20, l. 5. *Laborious* : Involving hard labour.

P. 20, l. 11. *Consistent with our own safety* : Which does not endanger our safety, or does not cause us harm.

## LETTER VIII

With his peculiar pose of simplicity, and subtlety, the Chinese philosopher here makes observations on the funeral customs and other kindred matters.

First, he notes that the English appear to him to be really afraid of death, though they do not at all admit it and pretend to be indifferent to it. With sly humour, the Chinaman notes how the dying patient is prevailed upon to make a confession to make a will, and how his friends bid him good-bye. All these preparations thus excite the terror of death. The same man who would have bravely met his death on the battlefield, cowers here before it.

Then the Chinaman comments on the custom of keeping up the corpse for persons to see—'lying in state', and shows its absurdity in some cases. He then makes some observations on the epitaphs and, with good humour, shows how they are touched up. If these epitaphs were to be taken at their face-value, the ancestors of the English would seem really an excellent nation, and that the English, at present, only their degenerate sons. Indeed, it appears that in death all are equal—death levels all—for all are equally highly praised. Then he says that men should write their own epitaphs, and try to live up to them for the rest of their lives—a whimsical idea, nevertheless arresting

and profound. Finally, he tells us of his intention to visit the Westminster Abbey, for, he is told that, there, the funeral honour of the nation are impartially bestowed. None but the deserving are honoured with a burial there. The obvious irony of these remarks is felt by every reader, and the essay concludes with the remark that these funeral honours can well be reserved for those who sacrifice their lives for their country, as they were in Sparta.

P. 20, l. 25. *His actions . . . . lie* : his actions seem to contradict what he says. The actions speak for themselves, and so the real truth is expressed not by his words, but by his actions.

P. 20, l. 26. *The Chinese are &c.* : We are not impressed by the Chinese in this matter. Their actions appear ridiculous. China therefore is no Utopia.

P. 21, l. 1. *Amplly provided for . . . . no more* : a paradox.

P. 21, l. 12. *For decency requires, etc.* : He is asked to confess and take the sacrament, not because he is dying, but, as they would pretend to say, that decency requires it.

P. 21, l. 22. *Flambeaux* (pl.) : flaming torches.

P. 21, l. 23. *how intrepid soever* : howsoever fearless he may be.

P. 21, ll. 24-25. *For fear if, &c.* : South is the irony. So strange are their actions. They really are anxious not to frighten their dying friends, and yet what they actually do is that they fill them with terror.

P. 21, l. 26. *Mistaken tenderness* : Thus their tenderness is mistaken, is wrong. Their tenderness is in reality, cruelty or torture.

P. 21, l. 28. *Contradictions* : inconsistencies.

P. 21, l. 32. *Intrepidity* : Firm or unshaken courage.

P. 22, l. 1. *A bastion* : Projecting part of fortification,—an irregular pentagon with its base at an angle with the main works.

P. 22, l. 1. *Deliberately noose* : Commits suicide by strangling himself with his garters.

P. 22, l. 3. *Internments* : burials.

P. 22, l. 5. *Undertaker* : One who manages funerals.

P. 22, l. 7. *lying in state* : the dead person being placed on view in a proper situation for the company to look at.

P. 22, l. 14. *gibbeted himself into infamy* : like a person hanged on a gibbet, became an object of public disgrace, his wicked life, while he lived, being brought to the notice of the people.

P. 22, l. 15. *retired into oblivion, might have died unknown* : no one knowing his past, wicked life.

P. 22, l. 17. *Epitaph* : A commemorative inscription on a tombstone or monument.

P. 22, l. 19. *the defunct* : the dead person.

P. 22, l. 22. *All men are equal in the dust* : Goldsmith interprets these common words in a new light. Compare also Shaw's aphorism : "Life levels all ; Death revels the eminent." [Read Shirley's famous poem, 'Death the Leveller'.]

P. 22, l. 28. *Some are praised for piety* : The remark shows clearly how far from truth the statement on the epitaph was ; the man who had never entered the Church in his life time, is praised for his piety or religiousness !

P. 23, l. 1. *The watch* : the watchman.

P. 23, l. 2. *bespeak* : engage beforehand.

P. 23, l. 6. *make it, etc.* : would endeavour all his life to be worthy.

P. 23, l. 12. *There are no intruders* : All this sentiment, by its exaggeration, appears to the reader unconsciously ironical. The Chinese philosopher sincerely believes it, but the reader knows that he will be soon disillusioned.

P. 23, l. 13. *unhallowed ashes* : i.e. the bodies of persons who have done nothing remarkable in their lives.

P. 23, l. 18. *equivocal* : doubtful.

P. 23, l. 19. *profaned* : violated the sanctity of.

P. 23, l. 21. *sepulchral* : (from *sepulchre*, tomb),—funeral honours paid to the dead at burials. The word, 'sepulchral', is, in modern English, used mostly in the sense of 'funeral, suggestive of funeral ; dismal'.

P. 23, l. 22. *national concern* : a matter or affair, affecting or under the care of the nation.

P. 23, l. 26. *I am taught to retract &c.* : here, the Chinese philosopher says that he has retracted, taken back, his former opinions, because he has now heard that these priests are dis-

interested. But we know that the facts are otherwise, and so the philosopher will have to retract his retraction.

P. 23, l. 29. *vindication* : defence.

P. 23, l. 31. *nerved* : strengthened.

P. 23, l. 32. *who fought for a grave* : who cared for funeral honours, and as the grave could be obtained only by dying on the battlefield, he could fight very bravely. He was not afraid of death, for, if he were to die, he would get what he had all along been wishing to get.

## LETTER IX.

The Chinaman visits the Westminster Abbey, and his reflections appear rather naïve, and indirectly convey a subtle sarcasm. The motive of the essay has to be taken into consideration. The Chinese Philosopher is introduced primarily to show the absurdities of English life and manners ; and hence, the object of Goldsmith is to bring out these details. Judged from this point of view, the essay would be found interesting.

The essay falls into three divisions. The first part is concerned with the monuments of the great—the national heroes, and others who deserve such public honour. The Chinaman, who in his simplicity thinks that the burial in the Abbey is managed impartially, is shocked to hear that the man with the most attractive monument was remarkable for nothing but having a tomb in Westminster ! The situation is thus finely conceived, and the revelation comes as a climax.

The second part is concerned with the Poets' Corner. And here, too, we perceive the sting of Goldsmith's satire, when we hear that there is no monument for Pope, the greatest poet of the last generation, because 'people have not done hating him yet.' There are other bitter remarks on the critics, who 'revile the living, and praise the dead'.

The last part is devoted to the so-called curiosities, and the ways of the guides, and the fees charged for seeing these national monuments. We agree with the Chinaman that the system of charging the fees is a national disgrace, and the plea that 'we all must live' is hardly justifiable. The Chinaman's shocked



surprise and indignation rouse us from our apathy, and we begin to see whether there is any justification for it beyond custom.

"He laughs", as Foster says, "at the sordidness which makes penny shows of the public temples of England, turns Deans and chapters into importunate beggars, and stoops to pick up half-pence at the tombs of English patriots and poets."

So, there is nothing sublime, or elevated in the reflection of the Chinaman, but his visit has revealed the corruption and evil lurking there and would set us thinking on the great and the mean associated with the Westminster Abbey.

P. 24, l. 3. *Westminster Abbey* is a magnificent Church in Westminster. It is one of the finest Gothic buildings in the world.

It was originally the Church of a Benedictine abbey, founded before the Norman conquerors. The west-front, the choir, the nave and the north-transept are magnificent in their beauty and proportion. But the gem of the building is Henry VII's chapel, the chapel of the Order of the Bath. The Abbey contains the tombs of many sovereigns, statesmen, poets and others, and a large number of memorials besides. In the south transept is the Poet's corner. The Abbey is the coronation-place of the sovereigns, and in it is kept the coronation-chair.

P. 24, l. 4. *Sepulture* : the place of burial ; the modern spelling in sepulchre.

P. 24, l. 11. *the temple* : The Chinaman calls the Church a temple.

P. 24, l. 14. *How does pride, &c.* : The philosopher was struck by the fact that there were signs of pride, magnificence, even in the place of burial. Men cannot forget their pride, but carry it even to their graves.

P. 24, l. 16. *I possess more consequence*. The living person, however insignificant, is more important than the dead, however great. There is an element of truth in this remark though it is not the whole truth.

P. 24, l. 18. *Transient immortality* : lit. immortality which lasts for a short time. Immortality means permanence, but in their case, what they consider to be immortality is only transience. Though they believe that inscriptions or monuments on their graves would make them immortal, i.e. make them live in the

memory of men, yet they would necessarily be forgotten in the course of a few years. Their memory would be really short-lived (*transient*) and not immortal. The figure of speech is Oxymoron.

P. 24, l. 31. *glorious incentive* : something urging men to achieve glory or honour.

P. 24, l. 32. *It is the duty, &c.* : Goldsmith is quite right in pointing out how this 'monumental pride,' this love for fame after death, can be utilised for the good of society. This love of of fame is a weakness in the individual ; for it does not matter to him at all, when he is dead, whether he is well or ill spoken of. But out of this weakness, the society, as a whole, can benefit itself. For, it will incite men to nobler deeds, if they come to know that they would win fame after their death.

P. 25, l. 8. *The Man in Black seemed impatient* : Naturally, because these observations were flatly contradicted by facts. The idealistic sentiment of the Chinese philosopher was thus at variance with the actual state of things.

P. 25, l. 33. '*Remarkable, Sir*' : This gentleman is remarkable for nothing else, but only for the fact that he has a tomb in Westminster Abbey. The satire is burning to the bone. A man is admitted to the Abbey not for some remarkable service, in recognition of his merit, but for his riches and ability to pay for fine monuments, and for no qualification of his own. The man thus becomes remarkable, only because he is admitted there. The Abbey thus became a burial-place not for those who had won fame before their death, but for those whom the Abbey desired to make famous after their death. This is a travesty of the original purpose.

P. 26, l. 4. *Should he not be ashamed* : The Chinese philosopher wants to know whether the man himself would not be ashamed to be thus buried in magnificent company, where a man with moderate merit would feel ashamed, whereas this man had not even moderate merit. But the Man in Black assures him that there are several men of the kind who have secured tombs in the Abbey.

P. 26, l. 9. *got* : gained.

P. 26, l. 14. *hated and shunned by the great, &c* : Note the antithesis.

P. 26, l. 22. *It is time enough* : Goldsmith had, perhaps, in mind the tardy honours paid to Shakespeare and Milton : the statue of Shakespeare was erected in the reign of George II ; the bust of Milton was placed in 1737.

P. 26, l. 28. *Answerers of books* : By this quaint phrase, Goldsmith means 'critics'. Perhaps the word 'answerer' may mean one whose duty it is to summon the offenders before law. The author was, so to say, the culprit who was to be judged according to the laws of letters.

P. 26, l. 29. *republic of letters* : literary men.

P. 26, l. 29. *distribute reputation by the sheet* : Professional critics believe that they are invested with full power and authority to pronounce judgment on the authors and their works. With airs of superiority, they judge the merits of the writers in the periodicals of the time, without knowing the true principles of criticism, or without having the equipment necessary for a critic.

P. 26, l. 30. *They somewhat resembled eunuchs*. A very bold comparison. The critics are represented as incapable themselves of producing good literature and also as preventing others from enjoying literature. On the whole, Goldsmith's comments are far too sweeping.

P. 26, l. 33. *cry out Duncce and Scribbler* : pronounce some authors to be dunces and others scribblers, i.e. writers of trash.

P. 26, l. 33. *To praise the dead, &c.* : How simple the formula appears. The critics could easily praise the ancients, and as for reviling the contemporary, there were many motives like jealousy, rancour, personal pride, etc.

P. 27, l. 1. *confessed abilities* : abilities that were acknowledged by all.

P. 27, l. 7. *All that is required* : Once more Goldsmith generalises ; the addition of the words 'very dull' makes the remark very biting.

P. 27, l. 10. *And in the pursuit . . . anxiety* : Note the antithesis : *empty* and *solid*. The fame is empty, because it is uncertain and is to be had at future date ; it will bring nothing substantial in the present.

P. 27, l. 14. *If he has much money* : Goldsmith bitterly complains against rich and titled authors.

P. 27, l. 18. *soften the rancour*, etc. : mitigate the pain caused by the spiteful, malicious criticism of dull-witted, ignorant critics.

P. 27, l. 27. *The monuments of the kings* : Edward the Confessor's chapel at the back of the high altar in the Abbey is known as the Chapel of the Kings.

P. 27, l. 31. *Whether the people of England*, etc. : The Chinaman properly expresses his surprise, when an entrance fee of three pence only was demanded. He is quite right in his criticism.

P. 28, l. 4. *Because I do not understand*, etc. : We smile at the strange reason given. The man means to say that he could not understand the arguments, and so they may be right for all he knows.

P. 28, l. 5. *Farm* : grant certain rights in return for a portion of what they yield ; (as 'to farm' the taxes). The gate-keeper had purchased the right for a lump-sum, and as such, he was interested in the collection.

P. 28, l. 7. *And we all must live* : The unconscious humour thus prevails. The man frankly admits that they must do something or other, noble or ignoble, for their livelihood. This small tax was one of the ways. Such an explanation, so frankly given, puts a stop to all argument.

P. 28, l. 15. *without once blushing, told a hundred lies* : without the slightest shame, told a number of lies. Note the antithesis between *once* and *hundred*.

P. 28, l. 22. *Could I, indeed, behold* : The Chinese philosopher is not impressed by the sight of the curiosity—the coronation-chair. He maintains that it would be a curious thing, indeed, a worthy sight, if he could behold one of the old kings seated in the chair, or Jacob's head lying on the pillow, as he was dreaming ! The philosopher is to be supposed to be indifferent to mere appearances, and hence the propriety of his remarks. We may not agree with him, but his point of view makes us conscious of the other side of the question. The curiosities are valued because of their associations and symbolic significance. In themselves, they have no value.

P. 29, l. 3. *To general Monk* : George Monk, afterwards Duke of Albemarle, who, in 1660, was chiefly instrumental in the restoration of Charles II. His tomb lies in the North Aisle of the Abbey.



P. 29, l. 8. *But this cap* : The guide, who was conducting the philosopher, shows him the armour and a cap of General Monk. He then requests all the visitors to put some coin into the cap which would go to him as his gratuity. This was an indirect way of begging some money from the visitors for the service done to them in pointing out the various objects. But the Chinaman would not pay anything, observing that the guardians of the temple should pay him and should not allow him 'to squeeze thus from every spectator.'

P. 29, l. 14. *squeeze* : get money by importunity, pressure or entreaty.

P. 29, l. 17. *The guardians of the temple* : However much they may get, they would never be satisfied with it. The suggestion is that, as it is, the payment is sufficiently heavy and they can very well afford to pay the guide.

P. 29, l. 19. *Ecclesiastical beggars* : the priests who, he fears, would also 'squeeze' him.

P. 29, l. 20. *precipitately* : with great haste.

## LETTER X

The Chinaman describes his visit to the theatre along with his friend, the Man in Black. We should remember that the play probably was *Douglas*, by Johnny Home, the Scottish Shakespeare. At least it was one of those heroic, ranting sentimental dramas, all tears and hyperbole, which Coleman and Goldsmith finally sent out of fashion. It is also quite necessary to remember that "Varieties" between the acts of a drama were common, down to a very late period and are even now not entirely obsolete in the provincial theatre. [Here, in India, we do not find such variety entertainments between the acts of a drama, though they are occasionally to be seen in the cinemas, when there is a 'double programme'—a double attraction.]

To appreciate the essay properly, we are to understand that the Chinaman represents the point of view of a philosopher, whereas the Man in Black is supposed to represent the average contemporary English taste.

The essay falls into a few clearly marked divisions. The first part is taken up with comments on external arrangements, on the audience and their behaviour. The Chinaman, being a stranger, and having a different standard, notes some of these peculiarities and comments on them. The Chinese play, we are told, lasts consecutively for eight or ten days, whereas an English play takes about four hours to enact. The philosopher was surprised to find the rich sitting in the pit and the poor sitting at the top. This seemed to him a curious inversion of the order of precedence, but the English would rather laugh at the philosopher for his ignorance than be impressed by the boldness of his observation. It is unnecessary to point out that the rich occupy the seats in the pit because they are really the better seats. Then the Chinaman notes that those sitting in the pit, arrogate to themselves the duties of the critics or connoisseurs. But the Man in Black points out that they are generally ignorant of the first principles of criticism and any man who called himself a critic, became one to all intents and purposes, even if he was without any qualification, by simply assuming the right. The Chinaman passes condemnatory remarks on the behaviour of the persons sitting in the boxes. They seemed to be too self-conscious, too much theatrical; they were as if acting in a dumb-show, and every nod and courtesy was an outcome of art and affectation and nothing was natural or spontaneous. They seemed also to be putting on spectacles, as spectacles were getting more fashionable.

Then the play begins, and the philosopher comments on the actress when she received with a polite courtesy the cheers of the audience. As regards the play itself, the Chinaman is disgusted with its exaggeration and artificiality. But the Man in Black seems to be properly impressed; he admires the part of the king and remarks that he is 'a man of spirit: he feels at every pore'. 'Death and tenderness are the leading passions of every modern buskined hero: this moment they embrace, and the next they stab, mixing daggers, and kisses in every period.' We are naturally led to perceive that the point of view of the Man in Black is absurd, and it is thus gently ridiculed. In the interval between the second act and the third, a variety entertainment is presented on the stage. A man balances a stick on his nose, and the feat

is highly applauded by the audience, though the Chinese philosopher is right in considering it as irrelevant. The Man in Black, voicing the common sentiment, remarks that nothing pleases the people more than seeing a straw balanced. There is a great deal of meaning in the straw ! Then the third act begins, and the villain of the piece comes on the stage and explains his plot in a soliloquy. The Chinaman with his realistic standard, is shocked at the crudity of the device and remarks that such soliloquies are never admitted in China. We may, in passing, say that this remark of Goldsmith is not true to fact. The soliloquies are, after all, a convention, and are not as absurd as Goldsmith represents them. In the drama of to-day, certainly, there are no soliloquies.

In the interval between the third and the fourth act, there is a dance on the stage. It diverts the audience and calls forth a few caustic comments from the philosopher. Once more, the Man in Black states the current view that ability in dancing is a greater recommendation to a man than his intellect. The last act is full of violent action and confusion, and then the absurd play ends. The Chinaman comments and says that unnecessary exaggeration and violent passions defeat their own purpose. It is not possible to sympathise with characters through five long acts. Pity is a short-lived passion. "There should be one great passion aimed at by the actor as well as by the poet, all the rest should be subordinate and contribute to make that the greater." The remarks of the Chinaman are cut short when they see that the audience had almost dispersed. The Chinaman and his friend tread their way with some difficulty through the crowd like birds in their flight through branches of a forest.

On the whole, we have a good essay here though it is not well-knit and compact. And as we do not know exactly what the play was, nor can make out sufficiently from the remarks of the Chinaman, our interest in it suffers to some extent. Yet Goldsmith's art is remarkable. First he makes a skilful use of the double angle—that of Chinaman and the Man in Black ; and secondly, in the wise observations put into the mouth of the Chinaman. In the course of the next few years, Goldsmith was to give a death-blow to these absurd, sentimental plays.

P. 29, l. 25. *As the Chinese etc. . . .* : Goldsmith is unreliable in details. The Chinese do not enact their plays in the open air, nor by daylight only, nor do their dramatic entertainments last for seven or eight days. Chinese plays often take in the acting three days and three nights.

P. 29, l. 30. *An English piece, etc.,* : We should note that the time taken for performance was now about four hours, whereas in the days of Shakespeare it was about three hours.

P. 30, l. 4. *At the foot of the stage* : Foot means the lower part or base ; here possibly, the pit.

P. 30, l. 14. *Testifying all the insolence* : The philosopher generalises and remarks that the noisy behaviour of the poor in the theatre was an instance of the insolence of beggars when raised to power. In the first flush of power, men forget themselves and behave insolently. Those who are accustomed to power do not lose their heads, but behave sanely. Here, the poor, sitting in the upper galleries thought they were masters of ceremonies, and indulged in making noises freely.

P. 30, l. 20. *assignments* : appointments (of time and place).

P. 30, l. 21. *that restraint . . . produces* : They appeared to be sedate and serious, as they posed to be the discerning judges of the play and the representation on the stage.

P. 30, l. 29. *Censor* : A judge. A Roman censor was an officer who kept account of the property of Roman citizens, imposed taxes, and watched over their morals. Hence, generally the word has come to mean 'one who censures or blames' i.e., a critic.

P. 30, l. 29. *Contradict his pretensions* : deny his claims as a critic.

P. 30, l. 30. *Every man who now called himself etc.* : One who called himself a connoisseur and assumed the task, became a connoisseur for all practical purposes. For no qualification was required, nor was there anybody to challenge the assumed function.

P. 30, l. 32. *Boxes* : In a theatre, a *box* is a small enclosure with several seats.

P. 31, l. 3. *Not a curtsy or nod, etc.* : Every courtesy or nod was the result of art, i.e., artificial. *Curtsy* means 'obeisance or bow made by bending the knees, proper to women and children.'

P. 31, l. 5. *designed for murder* : purposely intended to make a conquest (conquer the heart of someone).



P. 31, l. 5. *Ogled* : 'cast amorous glances'.

P. 31, l. 7. *Blindness was of late become fashionable* : i.e., many were wearing spectacles as a fashion and not because of any defect in their sight. Hence it is wittily said, with some exaggeration, that blindness was becoming fashionable.

P. 31, l. 15. *A Woman who personated a queen* : the actress who played the part of the queen.

P. 31, l. 21. *At the submission of the actress* : The philosopher thinks that the actress should have behaved like a queen, and not like an humble actress, making an obeisance to the audience.

P. 31, l. 22. *At the little discernment of the audience* : The philosopher blames the audience also, because they showed little judgment when they applauded the actress at her appearance before she had shown her skill. The applause ought to have been given afterwards. Here, however, it may be pointed out that the audience knew the actress, and that is why they greeted her entrance, perfectly certain that she would do well in the part. For all that the philosopher may say, the action of the audience is quite natural.

P. 31, l. 27. *Confidant* : One confided in or entrusted with secrets ; a bosom friend.

P. 32, l. 6. *At no very great misfortune* : To the philosopher the sorrow of the king and the queen appeared disproportionate—without adequate cause.

P. 32, l. 12. *not to survive the fierce disdain* : rather die than bear the violent scorn or contempt at the hands of the queen.

P. 32, l. 16. *you perceive the king to be a man of spirit* : The Man in Black does not find anything absurd, but seems to praise the things with enthusiasm. *A man of spirit* : one possessed of courage and self-assertion. *Feels at every pore* : carried away by strong emotions. *phlegmatic sons of clay* : spiritless, dull fellows. *Phlegmatic* : 'phlegm', formerly regarded as one of the four humours in the human body, the predominance of any of which determined the physical and mental constitution of a person. The predominance of 'phlegm' in the body was supposed to make a person sluggish and apathetic. So *phlegmatic* comes to mean 'sluggish ; apathetic ; not easily roused'.

P. 32, l. 21. *Buskined hero* : The word 'buskin' means a kind of thick-soled boot with high heels, worn by Athenian tragic actors to lend them height hence 'buskined' lit. means—wearing a buskin, i.e. acting in a tragedy. 'Buskined hero'—hero in a tragedy.

P. 32, l. 23. *Period* : here the word means, situation or scene in which they meet.

P. 32, l. 25. *Balancing a straw* : In the middle of the eighteenth century, there was a very celebrated balance-master, named Mattocks, who made appearance also at the Sadler's Wells. Among other tricks, he would balance a straw with great adroitness, sometimes on one hand, sometimes on the other ; and sometimes, he would kick it with his foot to a considerable height and catch it upon his nose, his chin or his forehead.

P. 32, l. 29. *Is he a part of the plot?*—No, it was a part of a variety entertainment, an 'interlude' between the acts of a drama, and in no way connected with it.

P. 33, l. 9. *Such soliloquies* : Once more China is but another name for Utopia. The custom of adjusting preliminaries between an actor and the audience, by means of an introductory monologue is very common in the Chinese drama. But Goldsmith, who is often inaccurate, supposes that, in China, there are no soliloquies ; because everything there must be dignified and be according to rules of propriety.

P. 33, l. 17. *reputable and genteel* : respectable

P. 32, l. 18. *Men have a greater chance*, etc. i.e. skill in dancing meets with greater approbation than intellectual achievement.

P. 33, l. 25. *Cant word* : cant is a language peculiar to a class, profession or sect.

P. 33, l. 26. *Who shews highest* : who can show her thighs or flourish them most. There is just an obscene hint in the word 'shows highest.'

P. 33, l. 29. *Of smart parts and great qualifications* : possessed intelligence, ability and qualities required for a king.

P. 34, l. 9. *Abigail* : A maid-servant ; a lady's maid ; from Abigail I Sam XXV.

P. 34, l. 10. *Fits are the true aposiopesis* : Aposiopesis is a useful rhetorical artifice in which the speaker, all of a sudden, breaks off—the succeeding silence having, like the faint-

ing fit in a tragedy, an eloquence of its own. The Man in Black seems to appreciate enthusiastically the art of the dramatist in making the queen fall into a fit. Fits, he says, are the true apopoeisis of modern tragedy. But we know that it is a cheap trick of covering the playwright's poverty of ideas.

P. 34, l. 27. *great passion* : one great emotion or sentiment.

P. 35, l. 3. *Palanquin poles* : 'palanquin', a light, covered, box-like carriage used in India, etc. for a single person and borne on the shoulders of men.

## LETTER XI

In this letter, Lien Chi learns the shocking news that his son Hingpo has been made a slave among the barbarians. Here begins the first chapter of Hingpo's eventful and checkered history. In keeping with his character as a philosopher, Altangi often expresses good sentiments, as we see in the earlier paragraphs of this letter. For instance, he remarks that his friend could have very well opened his letter, for it is a great pleasure to have one's joy or sorrows shared by friends. Once more, in keeping with the traditional character of the philosopher, he cannot control his strong feelings, his sorrow for the time being ; and so he breaks out into loud lamentations blaming fate. He is dissatisfied with all religions, none of which, he thinks, give a true solution of the problem of Evil. He eloquently pleads for a life beyond ; for, only in the other world, can the things of this world be righted. If there is no life after death, then we are cheated in this world, which is so full of misery. But if this life be all, he would blame his father for his own life, and himself, for the miserable life he had bequeathed to his descendants.

P. 35, l. 11. *made no ceremony* : did not hesitate from a sense of propriety.

P. 35, l. 16. *Every account etc.* : This seems to be the keynote of the letters from his son.

P. 35, l. 18. *Intrepidity* : With firm, unshaken courage.

P. 35, l. 21. *indulge in the transports of Nature* : give free course to the natural feeling of sorrow.

P. 35, l. 27. *Privately secreted* : Hidden ; concealed.

P. 36, l. 1. *Incited by the filial piety* : Inspired by the feeling of love and sense of duty that are expected of children towards their parents.

P. 36, l. 3. *confines* : Borders.

P. 36, l. 8. *who escaped their first fury* : i.e. who were not killed.

P. 36, l. 12. *To regale* : to entertain, with feast, or choice food.

P. 36, l. 18. *Mesched* : In Central Asia, it is situated to the north-east of Persia.

P. 36, l. 30. *Labyrinth* : used metaphorically ; literally, it means a place or complicated structure with many winding passages through which it is very difficult to find one's way out.

P. 37, l. 7. *Magi* : Priests of the Ancient Persians. The religious system as taught by Zoroaster and his followers, the Magi, is based upon the conflict between Ormuzd, god of light and good, and Ahriman, god of darkness and evil. The religion is held by the Parsees in India.

P. 37, l. 9. *bathes his visage in urine* : The urine of the cow is considered sacred by orthodox Hindus.

P. 37, l. 10. *The Christian who believes in three Gods* : One can easily see the distortion of the doctrine of the Trinity, when a Chinaman expresses it (union of Father, Son and the Holy Spirit in one Godhead).

P. 37, l. 14. *Kiss a stone* : A reference to the Mahomedan custom. This is a sacred Black-stone—Kaaba at Mecca. The Mohamedan pilgrims coming from distant parts of the World, kneel before it and kiss it as an object of devout worship. This custom still survives.

P. 37, l. 25. *If we are to experience* : If there is to be no more happiness, but only the happiness which this life affords, then we are miserable indeed, for, the happiness in this world is so uncertain, and so short-lived.

P. 37, l. 27. *If we are born only to look about us, etc.* : If our life is to be spent only in longing—only in looking before and after and in pining for the unfulfilled desire,—then our creator has done injustice to us. He is guilty of sending us into this



world only to keep us in a miserable condition ; for he could have very well made us happy even in this world.

P. 37, l. 32. *I received this* : I received this life.

## LETTER XII.

This satire on the quacks deserves to be carefully studied for its sly sarcasm. The Chinese philosopher maintains a mock-air of gravity and nowhere apparently blames the quack-doctors. The irony, however, that permeates the whole essay, can never be missed by the intelligent reader. And so, the satire becomes very effective. We enjoy the essay when we remember that Goldsmith himself was hardly better than a quack, though he would not have admitted it. He managed to get his degree in medicine, but he seems to have been quite ignorant of the medical science. He made some attempts to establish himself as a doctor, but soon gave up all ideas of practising. His friend Beauclerk is reported to have advised him to prescribe for his enemies only, and not for his friends, the innuendo being that his medicine would surely kill the patient.

The essayist first gravely refers to the extravagant claims made by the quacks to cure any disease, and pretends to be surprised at the cold reception, by the public, of these claims. Hence the extravagant suggestion is put forth that the quacks should rather undertake to cure the dead. For the dead alone would appreciate their merit ! With a becoming simplicity, it is stated that such a thing should not be impossible when already these doctors claim to have worked many miraculous cures. The qualifications of these doctors are gently ridiculed. We are told that these doctors received their knowledge even when they were in the womb, and many of them become conscious of their powers when they are reduced to bankruptcy or are in gaol. This statement is supported by a quotation about the practice in the east that a man should be an idiot before he pretends to be either a conjurer or a doctor. Lastly, the methods of diagnosis and the results of the cures are mentioned, and the essay concludes with the hammer-stroke that if the patient dies, it may justly be said that as the disorder was not cured, it was incurable ! So the doctor is free from all blame,

P. 38, l. 4. *Peculiarly excellent* : The words are obviously ironical. The doctors are not 'excellent', but are absolutely ignorant of the art of healing. They are quacks.

P. 38, l. 5. *incident to humanity* : from which men naturally suffer.

P. 38, l. 6. *infallible antidote* : Unfailing specific.

P. 38, l. 9. *doubting...medicine* : Notice the irony in the statement. Those who practise as doctors are cocksure of the efficacy of every medicine they prescribe.

P. 38, l. 9-10. *the advertising . . . . . difficulty* : the so-called doctors all advertise that they can cure any difficult disease.

P. 38, l. 11. *desperate* : so dangerous or serious as to leave little hope.

P. 38, l. 11. *radical* : (*lit.* go to the very root), deeply affecting the physical constitution ; deep-seated.

P. 38, l. 13. *certain cure* : infallible or sure cure.

P. 38, l. 13. *(without) knowledge of a bedfellow* : without knowing who is the person confined to bed owing to a disease and what he is exactly suffering from.

P. 38, l. 18. *Sure there must be something etc.* : The Chinese philosopher seems apparently to blame the public, but the real drift is clear ; the public is wise enough not to be deceived by such quacks or their advertisement.

P. 38, l. 20. *Refuses so much . . . . . terms* : would not regain his health so easily and at such small expense.

P. 38, l. 21. *bloated with dropsy* : overswollen on account of dropsy, (a disease in which water fluid collects in the cavities or tissues of the body).

P. 39, l. 8. *They ought in conscience etc.* : An absurd suggestion is thus so innocently, so solemnly put forth. The quacks are recommended to prescribe to the dead, because the living do not care for them. And it is suggested that their labour will be appreciated by all,—by the patient himself, by his son, and even by his wife.

P. 39, l. 15. *chimerical* : so fanciful as to be impossible to carry out.

P. 39, l. 20. *Electuary* : A composition of medicinal powders with honey or syrup.

P. 39, l. 20. *bungling ceremony* : clumsy, blundering procedure ; an instance of very caustic sarcasm.

P. 39, l. 29. *till bankruptcy* : i.e., they turn to medicine as a means of livelihood, only when they are ruined and have no other resource.

P. 40, l. 4. *physician by inspiration* : i.e. a quack who suddenly takes it in his head to practise as a doctor.

P. 40, l. 7. *intuition* : power of knowing the truth without reasoning.

P. 40, l. 8. *farrier* : horse-doctor.

P. 40, l. 9. *If the patient lives* : There is a subtle innuendo in addition to the plain meaning : it is, that the doctor has one more person to kill.

### LETTER XIII

This is indeed one of the most delightful and artistic letters in this collection. The character of the Man in Black is here revealed by concrete illustrations. The inconsistencies between his real good nature and his assumed hardness of heart are easily exposed, in situation after situation. As veil after veil is taken off, and as episode after episode stands as an ironic comment on his words, we realise how kind-hearted, sensitive a soul he possesses. Irony is often used to expose a villain, but here the method is inverted, and so we take all the more pleasure in the revelation. The episodes also are very finely arranged so that they lead up to a climax. First, we have a very simple episode of an old beggar ; secondly, that of a wounded soldier ; and thirdly, that of a woman in distress, singing ballads. Every time, the humanity of the Man in Black comes out. In the last episode, he is almost overwhelmed with pity, but finds himself unable to relieve the beggar-woman, as there was no coin with him. But his face is lit up with ineffable good nature, as he recollects that he had purchased a bundle of matches from the sailor-beggar, and so, as a last resort, he gives it to the woman. This end of the story, which connects the two episodes and brings about an artistic climax is indeed very skilfully worked up. The more we think of it, the more we appreciate Goldsmith's art. No

better climax could have been devised for the essay, and so it ends on the high note. Goldsmith was too much of an artist to spoil this end with any commonplace remarks.

Critics generally point out that Goldsmith has endowed the Man in Black with many of his own virtues : emotional sensibility in both was little restrained by prudential motives and, in both, benevolence was rather the effect of appetite than reason. This incompatible character was a favourite with Goldsmith, who, in every line, was recording what he believed to be prominent features of his own unworldly character.

The characters of the Man in Black as revealed in this essay has two strands ; outwardly, he professes to be a cynic—a man-hater, and to be prudent and thrifty ; whereas at bottom, he is full of benevolence and charity. He takes as much pains to hide his feelings as any hypocrite does to conceal his indifference. But every now and then, the mask falls off and the true man is revealed. We detect the warm and generous nature even in his pretence of having acquired worldly wisdom.

P. 40, l. 18. *Possesses my esteem* : Goldsmith liked the character of the Man in Black in whom he had embodied some of his own traits—particularly his benevolence.

P. 40, l. 19. *tinged with* : tinged or marked with.

P. 40, l. 19. *He may be justly termed an humourist etc.* : A humourist means an eccentric person in whom the humour was most pronounced. According to the medieval theory of medicine, the four humours should be properly, harmoniously, mixed in a man. But if one of them predominated, it determined the character of the man ; thus in a man of phlegmatic temperament, the humour called ' phelgm ' was believed to predominate. The English were often supposed to be a nation of humorists—a nation of eccentric characters, each with a pronounced individuality.

P. 40, l. 21. *Though he is generous* : generous even to profusion, he affects to be extremely prudent and thrifty ; a cynic in sentiment, and yet charitable in his deeds and disposition.

P. 40, l. 22. *A prodigy of parsimony and prudence* : A wonderful example of thrift and practical wisdom.

P. 40, l. 28. *Affect* : Pretend ; to pose to possess.

P. 40, l. 28. *Humanity* : Fellow-feeling ; kindness.



P. 41, l. 5. *Provision that was made for the poor* : In England, beggary has been made a crime, as provision has been made for the blind, the old, and other deserving objects of charity and the able-bodied were made to work in work-houses.

P. 41, l. 7. *So foolishly weak* : Hence the Man in Black maintains that private charity is foolish, because it is sentimental. If the beggar indeed deserves charity, he can get it from the parish. If he does not deserve it, then it is foolish to help him. In actual life, of course, there are many objects of charity who deserve to be relieved privately.

P. 41, ll. 7-8. *Occasional objects of charity* : beggars who present themselves now and then.

P. 41, l. 13. *vagrants* : persons without any settled dwelling ; wandering beggars.

P. 41, l. 14. *Weight* : Burden.

P. 41, l. 17. *imposture* : deception ; fraud.

P. 41, l. 24. *remnants of tattered finery* : worn out, tattered fine clothes, which he had worn in his better days. The episode of the old man is an ironic comment on the sentiments the Man in Black had professed. He had said that beggars should not be relieved, whereas he was now found relieving such an old beggar. The inconsistency between his professions and his innate good nature is thus revealed.

P. 41, l. 28. *prepossessed against* : Being already prejudiced against.

P. 41, l. 30. *visibly operate upon his countenance* : i.e. it could be clearly seen how the story was changing the expression of his face.

P. 41, l. 31. *harangue* : loud, vehement speech.

P. 42, l. 7. *He continued etc.* : The Man in Black now pretends to grow more bitter, and eloquently talks of his skill in discovering impostors. But presently a wounded soldier comes up before them. Is he an impostor? Can the Man in Black expose him? No.

P. 42, l. 23. *Engagement* : battle.

P. 42, l. 26. *He had lost his leg* : The sailor scores his point by remarking that he had lost his leg abroad in defence of those

who did nothing at home, and so he was a deserving object of charity as a public benefactor.

P. 42, l. 27. *importance* : sense of pride in being able to discover imposture.

P. 43, l. 6. *Here, master, take all my cargo* : The word 'cargo' is so appropriate to an ex-sailor.

Skilfully introduced as this second episode is, Goldsmith seems just to have missed the point in making the wounded soldier a real object of charity, instead of an impostor. The Chinaman as well as the readers may feel that the Man in Black was imposed upon, whereas from the details as well as from the language, it appears that the lame beggar was really a sailor, who had lost his leg in a naval fight. If he were really an impostor, the irony would have been much more interesting. However, Goldsmith brings out the 'reluctant goodness' of the Man in Black, irrespective of the object of charity.

P. 42, l. 25. *aimed at good humour* : tried to be cheerful.

P. 42, l. 28. *Upon this occasion, etc.* : He was fairly overwhelmed and would have openly relieved her distress ; yet, to his great confusion, he had nothing with him to relieve ; and so a comic situation arises.

This incident reminds us of one from the life of Goldsmith. Once, when playing whist at Sir William Chambers's house, he suddenly flung down his cards, and rushed out to give money to a poor woman singing in the street below.

P. 44, l. 3. *ineffable* : that cannot be told or described in words ; unutterable.

## LETTER XIV

Having sketched the interesting character of the Man in Black, Goldsmith was naturally led to describe the history of the man, —his education and experiences which serve to explain such a strange character. The detailed history has thus a psychological interest. The psychology is not, however, so convincing to a modern reader. It acquires a new interest, when we remember that this history is largely autobiographical. Goldsmith could have very well given an imaginary history, but he seems to draw

largely on his own past life and experiences for the obvious reason that the Man in Black was more or less himself, idealized. But we must not suppose that all the details in the history are autobiographical. We know nothing of Goldsmith's courtship, nor can we suppose that he was in jail because he had stood a security. But on the whole, the account is substantially autobiographical.

The Chinaman remarks that he was interested in the history of such a curious character. The Man in Black accedes to his request, remarking with a grim smile, that if he were interested in hair-breadth escapes, he would find his history interesting; for he had been ever on the verge of starvation, without ever being actually starved—and has had, so to say, many hair-breadth escapes from poverty and starvation.

The Man in Black begins by describing his father and his household. (This sketch of the father of the Man in Black is unmistakably a sketch of Goldsmith's own father—Rev. Charles Goldsmith.) His father was a younger son in a good family and had a small living in the church. Poor as he was, he had his flatterers still poorer than himself. "The same ambition that actuates a monarch at the head of an army, influenced my father at the head of his family. He loved all the world and he fancied all the world loved him." As for the children, he gave them good education. He developed their sensibilities, taught them to consider all the wants of mankind as their own. "He wound us up to be mere machines of pity." "In a word, they were perfectly instructed in the art of *giving away* thousands before they were taught the more necessary qualification of getting a farthing."

Then the Man in Black tells us of his education, and how he disappointed his father by not shining in the university. He cut a very middling figure because he neglected mathematics. [It is interesting to note that Goldsmith also neglected mathematics.] Yet, he tells us, his tutor remarked that he seemed to be very good-natured and had no harm in him. [These words "very good natured" and 'had no harm in him' are repeated like a refrain in this essay.] After seven years at college, his father died and left him nothing but his blessing. His friends

advised him to be a clergyman. But he had his strong objections to wearing a long wig, or to wearing a black coat. So he rejected a life of luxury, indolence and ease from no other consideration, but that boyish one of dress. (Once more, this account of the Man in Black has also a curious resemblance to Goldsmith's own history. It is stated that he appeared before the bishop in a scarlet dress, and so was rejected. Goldsmith, therefore, is giving a version of an episode from his own life. Hence, it is curious to remember what he thinks of a clergyman's life. It is a life of luxury and ease. Perhaps, in the case of Goldsmith, it was not an objection to the dress—a long wig and a black coat which a clergyman has to wear—but absence of faith that was at the root of his dislike for being a clergyman.)

The Man in Black afterwards became a flatterer to a great man. But soon he found out that as his lordship was a greater dunce than himself, the job of a flatterer became unbearable. [We can find a faint resemblance even to this in the life of Goldsmith. He was a tutor in a rich family; but he lost the job, as he accused his patron of cheating at cards.] Disappointed in ambition, he tells us, he had recourse to love. The whole account of this episode is diverting. It need not be looked upon as an authentic record. For it is almost unbelievable except as a skit upon women. When the Man in Black after scrupulously courting the lady, proposed to her, she told him that she had already been married to Mr. Shrimp with high-heeled shoes for the last three months!—the very Mr. Shrimp of whom she had been speaking, as it appeared to him, with detestation. The lady recommended him to woo her aunt, because the old lady always allowed him to be very good-natured and not to have the least share of harm in him.

Then he tells us of his bitter experiences in friendship when he wanted to borrow money from his friends, and finally tells us that he went to prison, because he stood a security for a friend of his. Even in prison he had the same painful experience that men would fleece him, because he was good-natured. In the prison, he was leading a contented life, without any anxiety for the future, and would have continued in this state of torpor;



but one day he was roused by seeing an old acquaintance of his, a prudent blockhead, appointed to a post in the government.

This came as an eye-opener to him. He made up his mind to pursue the right path. The true way of being able to relieve others, he now learned, was first to aim at independence. And so he left the prison and entirely reformed his conduct and behaviour: "for a free, open, undesigning deportment, he put on that of closeness, prudence and economy." His frugal life soon won him the reputation of 'a saving hunks that had money' and so he began to be esteemed everywhere. His advice was sought by all, and he got into high society. Now that he seldom wanted a dinner, he was invited to twenty! If a charity is proposed, he tells us, he goes about with the hat, but puts nothing in, himself. In short, he now finds that the truest way of finding esteem even from the indigent, is *to give away nothing and thus have much in our power to give*—a paradoxical, yet a true conclusion in keeping with the assumed character of the Man in Black.

From this history, we can account for both the strands in the character of the Man in Black: his innate goodness, his warm, generous nature which became more pronounced by the instruction of his father. Yet this trait had to be apparently suppressed, because, in actual life, he experienced its inconveniences and its bitter consequences. Not only could he be of no use to others, but even his own life was made very hard because of his good nature. Nobody would help him, because of his good nature, but on the contrary all would fleece him. He, therefore, found that he could serve the cause of charity much better by himself being independent, and by putting on a forbidding exterior. The world does not value a good-natured man, but a surly, rich man. Hence, he had assumed that pose of a worldly-wise man.

P. 44, l. 8. *reluctantly good*: good or kindness which he was unwilling to exercise, which he would try to 'suppress'.

P. 44, l. 14. *Appetite*: natural, spontaneous urge.

P. 44, l. 17. *Hair breadth 'scapes*: In a story of adventure, we are interested in hair breadth escapes. The Man in Black humorously applies them to his own history, where there are no thrilling hair breadth escapes. But they are supposed to be

in his own close struggle with poverty. These escapes are not physical but spiritual.

P. 44, l. 21. *living* : means of support for a clergyman.

P. 44, l. 21. *His education was, etc.* : i.e. his earnings or income was much below what a man of his education deserved to get, and no man of his education was ever found so generous as he was.

P. 44, l. 25. *The same ambition, etc.* : i.e. the ambition, to be looked up to as an authority, one whose word is law.

P. 44, l. 29. *The jest of the two scholars and one pair of breeches* : appears to be a common story of two undergraduates who had between them one full dress, so that, when one of them went out, the other had to keep himself indoors.

P. 44, l. 30. *The story of Taffy* : These are all imaginary stories; and it is useless to inquire what exactly they are. *Taffy* is a corruption of David, applied to Welshmen from their patron saint.

P. 45, l. 3. *lived . . . . it* : spent or exhausted; saved nothing.

P. 45, l. 5. *Dross* : as good as waste matter. Dross lit. means scum thrown off from metals in melting.

P. 45, l. 8. *morals* : moral conduct, conduct and manners, as pertaining to others, to society.

P. 45, l. 9. *understanding* : intelligence; the power of understanding and thinking.

P. 45, l. 9. *universal benevolence* : kindness to all.

P. 45, l. 10. *cemented* : united men so as to form society.

P. 45, l. 11. *the human-divine* : man is the image of God; and hence every human face is divine. To regard man, who is, indeed, divine, with affection and esteem. (The phrase is suggested by Milton's 'Paradise Lost' III, 440).

P. 45, l. 12. *wound us up . . . . pity* : ultimately turned us into men who would act on impulse, without thought, when moved with pity.

P. 45, l. 15-17. *instructed in the . . . farthing* : note the pointed antithesis in giving away thousands and getting a farthing.

P. 45, l. 21. *Insidious* : treacherous; deceive; working evil secretly.

P. 45, l. 18. *refined . . . suspicion* : i.e. rendered quite incapable of suspecting ; made perfectly credulous.

P. 45, l. 22. *gladiators who were exposed . . . Rome* : Gladiators were men trained to fight with swords at public shows in ancient Rome. Generally these were prisoners brought to Rome from various countries conquered by the Romans. They had to fight with swords, their bodies unprotected by any armour, in an *amphi-theatre*.

P. 46, l. 11. *left me—his blessing* : left me nothing but only his blessing.

P. 46, l. 16. *go into orders* : to become a clergyman.

P. 46, l. 22. *the best liver* : used in a double sense (1) one who guides his life in the wisest and noblest manner ; (2) one who enjoys the good things of life well—a bon vivant. The meaning obviously is that the man who enjoys most, like an Epicurean, is the wisest liver also.

P. 47, l. 17. *At her awkward acquaintance* : Acquaintance is a person with whom one is acquainted, but less than a friend. Here, as it turns out, this awkward person was, indeed, the husband of the lady. Such a simpleton the Man in Black was !

P. 47, l. 32. *Addresses* : Attentions of a lover.

P. 47, l. 33. *kindle her into sensibility* : rouse the feeling of love in her.

P. 48, l. 9. *scrivener* : a money-lender.

P. 49, l. 5. *Bails* : a surety.

P. 49, l. 6. *In prison* : The prison was a civil jail ; the debtor's prison.

P. 49, l. 10. *spunged up* : sucked in as a sponge does.

P. 49, l. 12. *cribbage* : a card game, played with stakes.

P. 49, l. 24. *indulged rants of spleen* : talked noisily in a theatrical manner, out of ill-temper or vexation.

P. 49, l. 24. *precarious* : uncertain ; depending on chance.

P. 49, l. 32. *Tacitus* : A famous Roman historian.

P. 49, l. 33. *torpid* : dull ; apathetic.

P. 50, l. 8. *undesigning* : free from all cunning or scheming ; straightforward.

P. 50, l. 9. *closeness* : stinginess ; niggardliness.

P. 50, l. 13. *ovation* : an enthusiastic public reception, to be accorded for any heroic action. In ancient Rome, victorious heroes were given an ovation on their return to the Capital.

P. 50, l. 16. *Hunks* : A covetous man ; a miser—(a singular noun).

P. 50, l. 20. *alderman* : magistrate in English cities, next in dignity to a Mayor.

P. 50, l. 32. *Indigent* : Poor ; destitute of means of subsistence ; in need of anything.

## LETTER XV.

In this letter, we have a few general observations of the Chinaman on the large number of books published every year in England, and his surprise at the comparative ignorance of the public in spite of such a large variety of books. Then the Chinaman wants to be acquainted with authors, and he is told that these authors do not come from the learned universities, but are amateurs who may write as they please and be as dull as they like. The Man in Black takes the Chinaman to a Club of Authors which used to meet every Saturday evening at the sign of the Broom near Islington. The host of the inn had also formerly been an author, but was raised to this position by the favour of a book-seller. The Man in Black draws thumb-nail character-sketches of some of the prominent members—Dr. Nonentity, a metaphysician, Tim Syllabub, and Mr. Tibs, a very useful hand who understands the business of an author as well as any man, and Lawyer Squint. As he was thus going on, the host came to inform them that as the bailiffs had infested the door, the club was not likely to meet. The broad hint was that the authors being, most of them, poor and in debt, were not likely to make appearance for fear of being arrested. The poverty of the Grub-street authors was a standing joke.

P. 51, l. 12. *In a manual not larger, etc.* : Goldsmith humorously points out the miscellaneous character of some of the books, in which, within a small compass all subjects were treated, very perfunctorily. Too ambitious in its scope, such a book would be almost worthless in its contents.



P. 51, l. 30. *They have by law a liberty* : Very humorously Goldsmith remarks, that the authors are, by law, at liberty to be as dull as they please. It is delicately suggested that law should prevent dull books being published—a desideratum which is not likely to be fulfilled on this side of the Utopia.

P. 52, l. 4. *Seminary* : A place of education. Here, the two Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

P. 52, l. 7. *some of them had actually forgot their reading* : The satire is biting enough. The learned professors not only do not write books but they have even forgotten their reading. Of course, it is an exaggeration but the sting of the satire is still there.

P. 52, l. 11. *The sign of the Broom* : The inns and the coffee-houses had sign-boards. The broom appears to be an appropriate sign for the meeting place of the authors.

P. 52, l. 18. *The host* : The host of the inn.

P. 52, l. 19. *Preferred* : Raised ; the broad hint is that the profession of an inn-keeper was higher than that of an author !

P. 52, l. 23. *As he seldom speaks* : Many have a reputation for being wise, because of their profound silence.

P. 52, l. 26. *Write indexes* : It appears that a sly hit is aimed here at Dr. Johnson, who had written a dictionary. (I am not quite sure, for Goldsmith had always a great respect for Dr. Johnson. But Dr. Nonentity brings immediately to our mind Dr. Johnson.)

P. 52, l. 28. *Draws up an answer* : Writes a criticism or a review.

P. 53, l. 2. *rebus* : a riddle. An enigmatical representation of a name or a thing by using pictorial devices for letters, syllables, or parts of words.

P. 53, l. 3. *tabernacle* : place of public worship.

P. 53, l. 6. *Mr. Tibs* : This Mr. Tibs does not appear to be the famous Beau Tibbs. Goldsmith must have forgotten that he had used the name here, as one of the members of the authors' club. Beau Tibbs has no pretensions to authorship. (There is a difference in the spelling, though that might be unintentional).

P. 53, l. 7. *receipts* : i.e. recipes, prescriptions of remedies.

P. 53, l. 8. *The business of the author* : The business part of authorship.

P. 53, l. 12. *he has paid for it* : Note the irony.

P. 53, l. 14. *Lawyer Squint* : It appears to me that some of the characteristics of Lawyer Squint are drawn from the great Burke, who was a lawyer and a politician. Of course, the character is fairly general, and the identification with Burke cannot be supported on any grounds. The description may easily fit many others also.

P. 53, l. 17. *seasonable* : appropriate for the occasion.

P. 53, l. 24. *To compose his character* : A comma after the word 'character', would make the meaning clear.

## LETTER XVI.

This is, indeed, a delightful essay and even a casual reader, who has read the earlier essay where merely the members of the Authors' Club were sketched, can easily see the improvement in this essay. In place of description, we have action. Perhaps, we may notice that the characters who take part in the proceedings, have not been sketched in the earlier essay. But that does not matter at all ; for we do not need any set characterization of them.

The portrait of the poet, in his shabby finery, reading with enthusiasm a description of his lodgings and appreciating strokes of genius in it, is very vividly and delightfully drawn. We also notice the reactions of the company to the reading. The whole scene is comic in the highest degree. We laugh when the members protest at the poet's presuming to read his poem and laugh at the rule of the club that the shilling which was imposed as a fine was to be distributed among the members for the hearing inflicted on them. Though the poet could ill-afford to pay the sum required by the rules of the club, he puts it down, as there were two strangers in the club ! All this is quite natural, and at the same time, very comic. The incongruity between the poet's estimate of his own poem, and its depreciation, behind his back, among the members, sets us laughing. Finally,

the president pronounces an equivocal judgment on it and insists on the author's putting the manuscript into his pocket, and thus abruptly closes the reading. Indeed, every detail in this part of the essay is artistically set forth. We enjoy it all the more when we remember that the lines of the Poet are by Goldsmith himself, and that he was even then, in 1760, entertaining high hopes of being recognised as a poet. These lines were published by him as a part of his famous poem '*The Traveller*'. That Goldsmith could thus take an objective view of himself and laugh at himself, is a mark of greatness and of the sense of humour he possessed. Poets may be touchy, sensitive to ridicule, but Goldsmith at least could laugh heartily at himself.

Goldsmith had already made it clear that the so-called republic of letters is no republic; and that every member of the profession was jealous of the others, and tried to pull down anybody who aspired to rise. So we do not expect the other members to appreciate even a fine poem—though it may not be so fine as the poet himself may think it to be. So we watch their hypocritical manners.

The second half of the essay is taken up with the account of the state of the literary profession and of patronage. The literary profession was very much crowded and ill-paid. The system of patronage—patronage of the lords, by subscription or otherwise—was falling into disuse. Instances given here are naturally exaggerated that they may suit the comic purpose. Nonetheless, the picture is substantially accurate.

In all this description of the meeting of the authors' club, we forget the Chinaman whose presence is indicated by the introductory and the concluding remarks. We entirely agree with him that we get a more accurate picture of the life and the manners of a country by such a detailed description, even of ordinary, trivial things. We do not blame Goldsmith for giving us an account of the meeting of the authors' club. For in its own way, such an account has an historic value.

P. 54, l. 1. *A minute detail of English peculiarities*: Thus the author prepares us for the account to follow.

P. 54, l. 7. *The genius of a country*: These details serve the

purpose of induction. When sufficient details are thus collected, it becomes easy to generalise with certainty and accuracy.

P. 54, l. 11. *My friend* : The Man in Black.

P. 54, l. 14. *Shabby-finery* : the finery shows his love of gaudiness ; yet as it was shabby, it shows his poverty and carelessness.

P. 54, l. 16. *The first book of an heroic poem* : The first division of an epic poem. An epic poem or a heroic poem is divided into books.

P. 54, l. 16. *Heroic poem* : A poem in the heroic metre, i.e., written in couplets. As regards the subject-matter, a heroic poem deals with heroic characters and should be instructive or didactic in its purpose. The hero of this poem was however, the poet himself, and so it can hardly be called a heroic poem except for its metre.

P. 54, l. 19. *Indulged with a particular hearing* : Should be shown the indulgence—i.e. the special favour—of a special hearing.

P. 54, l. 25. *Remonstrances* : A remonstrance means a strong statement of reason against an act ; an expostulation.

P. 54, l. 32. *Recompence* : remuneration. The word is now spelt 'recompense'.

P. 55, l. 1. *To shrink at* : to draw back as from fear.

P. 55, l. 6. *Prerogative* : Literally, it means a peculiar privilege shared by no other ; a right arising out of one's rank or position ; here, therefore, it means broadly, his right.

P. 55, l. 10. *Turnus and Dido* : The chief characters in Virgil's Aeneid ; hence these stand for the conventional epic heroes and heroines.

P. 55, l. 12. *Unison* : harmony ; agreement.

P. 55, l. 19. *Red Lion* : The sign of the Red Lion.

P. 55, l. 22. *Drab* : A low sluttish woman.

P. 55, l. 22. *Blood* : A rake or swaggering dandy about town.

P. 55, l. 29. *The royal game of goose* : A game of chance, once common in England, in which the players moved counters forward from one compartment on a board to another, the right to a double move being secured when the card bearing the picture of a goose was reached.

P. 55, l. 31. *Listing* : Borders ; stripes of any kind.

P. 55, l. 35. *Arrears* : unpaid bills.



P. 56, l. 2. *bay* : leaves of the bay tree—laurels—an emblem of distinction in poetry.

P. 56, l. 3. *A cap by night* : The cap would serve a double purpose ; it would be a cap by night time, and it would serve as a stocking by day. We laugh at the shift which the poet has to make on account of his poverty.

P. 56, l. 6. *Rabelais's bed-chamber* : Rabelais was a famous French humorist ; the well-known description of the bedchamber by Rabelais cannot stand a moment's comparison, would appear foolish, by the side of this description. Cf. *King Lear* (2. 3. 117) *Kent* : None of these rogues and cowards, but Ajax is their fool.

P. 56, l. 9. *Sound and sense* : The poet points out that the poem has all the poetic merits—sound, sense, truth, and nature—all the features which the classic critics would expect. He wants to say that the description is true to nature.

P. 56, l. 23. *when it comes out* : when it will be published. The antithesis between 'when it comes out' and 'to put it in' is well expressed.

P. 56, l. 25. *ex ungue Herculem* : A well-known Latin proverb, which means "Judge the lion from his claws" or "Judge Hercules from his foot". It is used to signify that from a specimen, one can make out the greatness of the whole. The president says that the specimen is quite sufficient to convince them about the whole poem ; and the whole of it, therefore, need not be read.

P. 57, l. 1. *can be so dull as to write poetry* : Complaints about poetry not bringing in money are quite common in all ages. Here the hack-writer says that when prose does not pay, it is folly to expect poetry to pay.

P. 57, l. 7. *Prebend's stall* : A prebendary is a resident clergyman who enjoys a *prebend*—a canon ; the honorary holder of a disendowed prebendal stall—or prebend's stall.

P. 57, l. 16. *Subscribe worse* : Pay less as subscription. Books were published with the subscription paid by the nobility. A vast sum was thus subscribed for Pope's *Iliad*. It was a method of patronising an author by thus ensuring him a sum in advance as subscription for his book.

P. 57, l. 23. *The Creolian* : A person who has suddenly grown rich. A Creole is a person of European blood, who is born in the

West Indies. Hence, here, one who has suddenly grown rich by speculating in the West Indies.

P. 57, l. 28. *valet de chambre* : a man-servant who attends on a man's person and clothes.

P. 58, l. 4. *Vamped up* : patched up ; cooked up, improvised.

P. 58, l. 4. *Flaunting* : gaudy ; showy.

P. 58, l. 5. *Panegyric* : An oration or eulogy in praise of some person.

P. 58, l. 6. *wheedled* : To entice by soft words ; a mouse hardly gets any milk itself, and hence the phrase.

P. 58, l. 14. *Led the life of a fiend* : Was excessively tormented ; was excessively restless, owing to suspense.

P. 58, l. 21. *Six copies of verse* : The conclusion of the story is so funny that we cannot help laughing at the discomfiture of the poet. Our secret sympathy goes with the lord who must have been pestered with these panegyrics.

P. 58, l. 25. *The Catchpole* : a constable ; a petty officer of justice ; a bailiff.

P. 58, l. 26. *When I was delivered* : gave birth to a poem (metaphorically).

P. 59, l. 4. *decoy* : entice one out by some trick.

P. 59, l. 4. *citadel* : (lit. fort or castle within a city), last retreat, where one could be secure.

P. 60, l. 4. *Spunging house* : The civil jail or the debtor's prison.

P. 60, l. 16. *Than histories of their public treaties* : We agree with this view of Goldsmith. History should not be confined only to political events, to wars, treaties, etc.

## LETTER XVII.

Goldsmith's knowledge of China, and Chinese life and manners was scanty and limited. His Chinese philosopher must, therefore, have irritated some of his contemporaries. But, here Goldsmith delicately scores off his point by ridiculing the misapprehensions of his critics and maintaining his own point of view. China, Goldsmith maintains, is a civilised country, and a Chinese philosopher may well be a learned man, full of sound common-sense. He need not be an outlandish idiot, as many

of the public expected him to be. Goldsmith's China is partly a Utopia, and partly China, as we know it. Yet we have to admit that Goldsmith has put up the best possible defence. It is all very humorously made, so that, instead of finding fault with Goldsmith, or picking holes in his argument, we enjoy his delicate raillery of his opponents. He is quite right in pointing out that the Persians and the Arabians are quite different from the Chinese. The English public does not make any difference, and classes all foreigners as Easterners, but there are, in fact, very wide differences between men of the Near East and those of the Far East. Goldsmith was right in taking the Chinaman for his central character, and in endowing him with insight and wisdom.

P. 60, l. 21. *I am disgusted* : The tone of exasperation immediately wins the sympathy of the reader. The Chinaman naturally complains that he knows more of China than his critics do. But when we know that the Chinaman, Altangi, is an imaginary character, we are not impressed by his exasperation, except as a literary device.

P. 60, l. 22. *presumption* : arrogance ; airs of superiority.

P. 60, l. 28. *voluptuous barbarities* : coarse manners, and cruel conduct which are due to their excessive love of sensual pleasures.

P. 60, l. 29. *raise diffidence* : give rise to distrust.

P. 61, l. 5. *He must be some, etc.* : Though that is the fact, the very way in which the objection is forestalled makes it harmless. We laugh at the statement.

P. 61, l. 6. *exotic* : of foreigners ; outlandishness.

P. 61, l. 13. *Opium and tobacco box* : The public always associated opium eating with the Chinese, and tobacco-chewing or tobacco-smoking with the Turks.

P. 61, l. 16. *she understood, etc.* : she knew the right etiquette so well that she would not with an Oriental use the ordinary English forms of politeness ; she felt she must receive an Oriental with those civilities that are peculiar to his own country.

P. 61, l. 28. *a plate of Bear's claws or a slice of Bird's nests* : As one can easily see, these things are absurd. Who can possibly eat a dish of bear's claws. Europeans had very queer, absurd ideas about the dishes that the Chinese are fond of.

P. 61, l. 31. *to be helped from* : to be served with.

P. 61, l. 32. *disconcerted* : confused at something quite unexpected.

P. 61, l. 33. *local propriety* : what is proper, considering the place (to which the Chinaman belonged).

P. 62, l. 1. *Chinese pheasant* : a variety of the pheasant ; the horned pheasants, or tragopans.

P. 62, l. 5. *Pilaw* : a dish, in origin, purely Mahomedan, consisting of meat or fowl, boiled along with rice and spices.

P. 62, l. 7. *had no sooner began* : should be 'had no sooner begun'.

P. 62, l. 9. *chop-sticks* : two small sticks of wood, ivory, etc., used by the Chinese, instead of knife and fork.

P. 62, l. 14. *silencing* : answering, so as to silence them by satisfying their curiosity.

P. 62, l. 16. *pursue the triumph* : follow up the success ; impress the company further with his fund of knowledge.

P. 62, l. 18. *Born in Quamsi* : The point is very wittily expressed. Quamsi may be (an imaginary) Chinese town.

P. 62, l. 19. *as erroneously . . . . moon* : i.e. quite wrong.

P. 62, l. 20. *Chinese cut* : features peculiar to the Chinese.

P. 62, l. 22. *Reasoned me out of my country* : showed by his arguments that I did not belong to my own country.

P. 62, l. 23. *effectually persuaded* : so thoroughly convinced that they too thought so.

P. 62, l. 26. *delivery* : manner of speaking.

P. 62, l. 30. *sublimity* : what is sublime, i.e. exalted, grand, awe-inspiring, raised above the ordinary.

P. 62, l. 31. *an history of Aboulfaouris* : an imaginary history, full of the marvellous, written by a fictitious Muhammadan author.

P. 63, l. 2. *but* : that not.

P. 63, l. 3. *I have compared, etc.* : Goldsmith pokes sly fun at the supposed eastern manner, of describing everything in hyperbolic, high-flown style.

P. 63, l. 10. *Houries* : nymphs of Muhammadan paradise ; voluptuously beautiful women.

P. 63, l. 14. *the Penguin* : penguin is a perfectly white sea-fowl in the Southern (Antartic) hemisphere. It cannot fly, but



its wings, which are nothing but scaly paddles, enable it to swim under water.

P. 63, l. 20. *Every advance* : The hint is plain and broad that there is no meaning whatever in the grand and sonorous words ; and whenever there is any sense, it is so far a deviation from sound, i.e., the words then are not so gorgeous and high-flown. The more sense, the less sound. Eastern story-tellers strive more after sound than sense.

P. 63, l. 24. *eastern idiom* : the specific form and style of expression, peculiar to the eastern languages.

P. 63, l. 26. *Whether he had travelled* : The Chinese philosopher thus exposes the ignorance of his critic that he knows nothing of the East at first hand, and is ignorant of any of the eastern languages.

P. 63, l. 29. *determine upon* : know for certain.

P. 63, l. 33. *palmed upon you* : imposed fraudulently on you.

P. 64, l. 5. *The method of writing* : Goldsmith wants to say that the Chinese appeal more to intellect than to imagination.

P. 64, l. 5. *a cool, phlegmatic etc.* : most of the writers write in an unemotional matter-of-fact style.

P. 64, l. 26. *Tonquinese* : people of Tonquin (Tong King), the north-eastern part of French Indo-China. Hanoi, the capital of French Indo-China, is in this region.

P. 64, l. 27. *Cochin-China* : southern-most part of French Indo-China, and hinterland of the port of Saigon.

P. 65, l. 8. *Tillotson* : One of the well-known preachers.

P. 65, l. 14. The END is in the charming manner which disarms all criticism ; for the Chinaman admits that none of the company were listening to what he was prosing. By calling his own explanation dull, he forestalls criticism and rather makes us protest (and say) that it was both convincing and interesting.

## LETTER XVIII.

In this letter, we are first introduced to the story of Hingpo's love and adventures. The letters of Hingpo to his father, in which he recounts his adventures, are written in a highly romantic strain.

Hingpo first complains of his own slavery. He tells him that not only his body but even his mind is bending beneath the rigours of servitude. Then he informs him how he is raised to be the personal attendant of his master in place of the Christian slave who was stabbed to death because he happened to enter when his master was entertaining the ladies of his harem. He then deplores that the tyrants reduce others, for the sake of their happiness, to misery. Passionately he, too, expresses his belief that this jarring discordant life should be a prelude to some future harmony in the other world, where his soul would be happy, and would meet his father. Then he proceeds to say that his master has recently purchased a beautiful Christian slave who is too proud to accept the offer of her lord to make her his wife. He rapturously praises her celestial beauty and tells his father that but for her sorrow she would have been regarded a celestial being. Then he speaks of the envy he has begun to feel for his master, but he is careful to add that it is not out of love for the slave girl. He protests too much when he says that he, the philosopher's son, and the pupil of the wise Fum Hoam, could not stoop to so degrading a passion. He, therefore, wants to say that his sentiments are an outcome of universal benevolence, and not of personal love. It was because he has been taught to love all persons and to sympathise with others in their sorrow, he feels so much pity for the Christian slave. But we readers, who can read between the lines, are convinced that it is nothing but love for the Christian slave-girl, that has taken possession of Hingpo's heart.

P. 65. l. 32. *Entirely subservient* : In the exaggerated sentimental way, Hingpo says that he is really a slave of his father, though the master of his body might be a different one. Nature and inclination lead him to render all service to his father. To us, the relation of the father and the son, is not that of master and slave ; it is one of love, of respect, of gratitude.

P. 66, l. 3. *I find my soul shrink* : I am losing my strength of mind, my fortitude, and I find myself unable to bear up under my present misfortune ; the soul is no longer as free and daring as it was before.

P. 66, l. 4. *rigours* : severe hardships.

P. 66, l. 11. *Haram* : harem, women's apartments in Muham-madan house.

P. 66, l. 20. *Houseless Tartar of Kamkatska* : The nomadic Tartar tribes of Kamtchatka, a peninsula in the north-east of Asia.

P. 66, l. 28. *Prelude* : a preceding condition, intended to serve an introduction to.

P. 66, l. 33. *Give a loose to* : Give a loose rein or a free vent to.

P. 67, l. 13. *She cannot refuse etc.* : We smile at the importance thus attached to the offer of marriage. We now begin to feel how Hingpo's soul 'shrinks.' Indeed, Goldsmith's art in such subtle psychological strokes deserves to be appreciated.

P. 67, l. 16. *Inadvertently* : Through over-sight ; without fully considering the consequences.

P. 67, l. 20. *her beauty seemed, etc.* ; one so beautiful must be virtuous.

P. 67, l. 21. *Celestial beings could not, etc.* : Her perfect beauty would lead one to take her for a heavenly being, but her sorrow pointed to the fact that she was a human being.

P. 67, l. 29. *Loaded, rather than enriched* : Note the contrast ; the word 'loaded' is very happily used. To a man of such coarse, low nature, all the fine gifts of fortune were more or less a burden, inasmuch as he was incapable of drawing real enjoyment from them which only a man of noble nature and refined taste can do.

P. 68, l. 3. *Uneasy sensations* : feelings which make me uneasy ; feelings of envy and sorrow.

P. 68, l. 7. *so much excellence, etc.* : a woman of such beauty should fall to the lot of a low minded, barbarous man.

P. 68, l. 14. *Sallies of humanity* : Spontaneous acts of kindness or benevolence.

P. 68, l. 16. *sensibility* : fitness of feeling.

P. 68, l. 20. *Seems only... severity* : because it is not true love, but mere animal passion or lust.

## LETTER XIX.

We have, in this letter, a beautiful description of the grand preparations for the marriage of the Christian slave, Zelis, to



Mostadad, the master of Hingpo. This rich note comes as a surprise and a solace in this pathetic history. It shows Goldsmith's skill in describing vividly such a scene.

It is not Hingpo's object merely to describe the grandeur of this scene. He must give vent to his own sentiments and feelings, and hence we have a revelation of a lover's heart. For a moment, he even feels that he would gladly exchange his state with that of the ignorant barbarian tyrant, because he was to be the husband of the beautiful slave-girl. But no sooner is such a thought expressed than he feels revulsion at the idea; once more his philosophical temper asserts itself. He would not lose hold of his high principles and exchange them for the animal pleasures of his tyrant. Once more, he protests that his gloom is due to love and feels he is wretched, very wretched, because he is denied even the last resource of misery, namely, tears.

P. 68, l. 25. *fastidious* : hard to please ; refusing what others are pleased with.

P. 68, l. 26. *transport* : great joy ; ecstasy.

P. 68, l. 29. *Mostadad* : The name of his Persian master ;

P. 69, l. 2. *Assiduity* : diligence ; continual attention.

P. 69, l. 9. *Nuptials* : Wedding ceremony ; marriage.

P. 69, l. 10. *Barboura* : An auspicious day.

P. 69, l. 10. *An hundred taels* : A tael is a coin worth only seven shillings. A critic remarks that Goldsmith himself must have been ignorant of the true value of tael ; for a sum of a hundred taels is not sufficiently imposing.

P. 70, l. 2. *Menceus* : Mang, the philosopher, regarded in China as second only to Confucius. Like Confucius, he was a political, social and moral reformer, and not a prophet or preacher of any new creed or set of doctrines.

P. 70, l. 2. *And yet, etc.* : The Chinaman believes that no one who has not read Mencius can have such a refined, cultured mind, as would enable him to enjoy real happiness.

P. 70, l. 10. *transport* : vehement emotion.

P. 70, ll. 10-11. *the golden mean* : principle of moderation, having neither too much nor too little. *Universal harmony* : perfect accord among all men.

P. 70, l. 11. *unchanging essence* : principle that is true for all time and so it cannot change.



P. 70, l. 14. *Pare my nails* : It appears that long nails were then a mark of a philosopher in China. Hence paring nails would mean degrading one as a philosopher.

P. 70, l. 19. *serenity etc.* : remaining calm, unperturbed in the midst of sore trials and sufferings.

P. 70, l. 24. *a tissue of silver* : a fine cloth with figures woven in silver thread.

P. 70, l. 25. *Pearls of Ormus* : The Strait of Ormuz (Hormuz) is at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, a famous centre for pearl trade.

P. 70, l. 25. *But why tease etc.* : Goldsmith once more disarms criticism, by himself calling the details trivial. Of course, the real explanation is that to a lover like Hingpo, nothing connected with Zelis is trivial.

P. 70, l. 28. *To some other cause* : namely, love.

## LETTER XX.

The Chinese philosopher visits St. Paul's and, in his odd way, criticises many of the features of English life as revealed there. Goldsmith's usual formula—to raise a laugh at the philosopher himself to establish good humour—is seen even here. The Chinese philosopher oddly remarks that the banners of the enemies kept in St. Paul's as memorials of war and symbols of victory, are merely ragged pieces of silk and so he gravely wonders at the absurd ideas of honour prevailing among the English. Such a queer criticism calls forth laughter at the expense of the person making the remark ; but the Chinese philosopher with his ignorance of English life, may very well make it, without risking his reputation.

The Chinaman, then, notes that the congregation seems to attend to the oracles of the idol, viz. the music of the organ. He takes the organ to be the idol in the church, and its tones to be the oracles. As soon as the music was over, most of the congregation left the Cathedral. This leads the Chinaman to think that the service (worship) is over ; but the Man in Black assures him that it is not so, and tells him that he would find many devout persons among those left in the Cathedral.

Yet, as the irony of things would have it, the Chinaman finds that even among the so-called devout, there are many who are

either addressing their lady-loves, or ogling at them. He even sees one young man fast asleep and the Man in Black has to explain that he had eaten too much. When another case, that of a young lady fallen asleep during the sermon, was pointed out to him, the Man in Black has to admit that she is sleeping because she had kept herself awake at a card-party last night. But the climax comes when the only apparently devout person turns out to be a deaf lady !

Lastly, the Chinaman expected that the priests at least were devout, and would be chosen for their sanctity. Yet the facts disillusioned him. Many were selected, because of their connections, and some did no part of their job, though they were paid for it ; some performed their part of the job through their deputies, i.e. vicars. Thus, some of the abuses in the church-patronage are exposed.

P. 71, l. 5. *The grand Abbey* : The Abbey of Westminster.

P. 71, l. 5. *Mausoleum* : A magnificent burial place.

P. 71, l. 7. *A temple, not so ancient* : St. Paul's Cathedral ; the cathedral church of the Diocese of London. The present building was built between 1675 and 1710 from designs by Sir Christopher Wren. It is a Renaissance building unlike other English Cathedrals. Features of the building are the dome, the crypt in which many famous men are buried, and the whispering gallery. It contains many naval, military and other memorials.

P. 71, l. 7. *Not so ancient* : St. Paul's Cathedral is comparatively recent. Its beauty lies in its simplicity ; its magnificence, in nakedness and want of ornament.

P. 71, l. 11. *Rags* : The banners of the enemy, taken as the trophies of victory.

P. 71, l. 15. *Fitted out a fleet etc.* : This is a wilful distortion. The army and the navy, it need hardly be said, were never fitted out merely to bring these rags.

P. 71, l. 25. *The idol, etc.* : The organ of St. Paul's.

P. 71, l. 30. *An old woman* : It is not quite clear what function was assigned to this old woman. Was she merely in charge of the organ ?

P. 72, l. 4. *When the idol etc.* : When the music of the organ ended.

P. 72, l. 18. *A parcel of musical blockades* : Persons only caring for music, and not for religion or worship.

P. 72, l. 24. *Among us* : Among those who remained behind, here.

P. 72, l. 30. *duties of the day* : i.e. the book of Common Prayer.

P. 73, l. 2. *trance* : a state in which the soul seems to have gone out of the body, or to be wholly taken up with visions of another world.

P. 73, l. 9. *Censorious* : fault-finding ; over-critical.

P. 73, l. 10. *profanation* : treating a sacred thing or something entitled to respect, with disregard or irreverence.

P. 73, l. 12. *Brag party* : a game of cards, essentially identical with the modern game of 'poker.' The name is taken from the 'brag' or challenge, given by one of the players to the rest to turn up cards equal in value to his.

P. 73, l. 16. *edified* : benefited spiritually ; made wiser.

P. 73, l. 17. *I knew, etc.* : Some who would deceive you by their appearance ; the Man in Black explains that the lady who seemed to be attentive and greatly edified with what she seemed to hear, was really deaf ! And so, no question of her being edified by what she heard would indeed arise at all !

P. 73, l. 18 : *Cloysters* : properly *Cloisters*, the covered walk within the walls of a Cathedral.

P. 73, l. 19. *Remissness* : slackness, carelessness ; want of proper behaviour.

P. 73, l. 20. *Guardians* : The Chinaman means the priests, clergymen.

P. 73, l. 23. *Sanctity* : purity of life. *Rectitude* : Uprightness.

P. 73, l. 31. *Over temples, etc.* : Vicars are appointed in their places ; and the difference in the pay goes into the pockets of the clergymen, nominally appointed to the living. This system was quite common and also tolerated for a long while.

## LETTER XXI.

Beau Tibbs, the shabby genteel Beau, is one of the *living* characters in the 'Citizen of the World,' and in this letter, we make our first acquaintance with him. The Man in Black wants to avoid him, and so, he and the Chinaman make every attempt to evade him. But the Beau at last succeeds in overtaking them.

The conversation of Beau Tibbs is, indeed, very light and lively. Goldsmith's art in thus presenting the character through his conversation deserves all praise. With a few dramatic touches, Beau Tibbs starts into life, and becomes a familiar, and unforgettable figure. His shabby genteel dress is minutely described. His pinched hat, his sword, his buckles studded with glass, and his silk-stockings turned yellow, by long service, are all noted. He speaks, very familiarly of Lord Mudler and Lady Mudler, and the Duchess of Piccadily, and so on. But the truth comes out that all these friends of the Beau are creations of his imagination. Even when he talks of a promise of £500 from a lord, talks of betting a thousand, this conversation always ends with request for the loan of half a crown for a minute or two. He pretends that he does everything in the latest style, in the polished manner of the aristocrats. When the Beau is gone, the Man in Black comments on him and reads a prosy lesson ; " when age comes on, the gravity of which is incompatible with buffoonary, then will he find himself forsaken by all." But we are not impressed by the moral. We are highly diverted by the Beau's character, by his absurd pretensions which he himself has come to believe seriously. His pretensions do not deceive anybody. To us they appear very grotesque. We rather pity him, and, are tickled by his tall talk, by his pretensions. The fact that he has come to believe seriously in what he talks is one of the elements of the humour of the character. This self-deception is at once the highest pathos, and the source of the true ridiculous.'

P. 74, l. 5. *dismissing the mind from duty* : detaching the mind from serious affairs ; ceasing to think of the serious duties of life.

P. 74, l. 7. *Wherever pleasure is to be sold* : pleasure is to be had ; I avail myself of every opportunity of getting pleasure, amusing myself.

P. 74, l. 9. *work my passions, etc.* : gradually excite my feelings artificially, so that I appear to be as serious about trifling matters as the common people.

P. 74, l. 11. *A mind thus sunk : sunk . . . standard, relaxed* : Occasional relaxation is thus helpful.

P. 74, l. 28. *gained upon us* : got closer and closer to us.

P. 75, l. 1. *This half a century* : Note the exaggeration ; it is a smart way of expressing his surprise at long absence.



P. 75, l. 2. *Cultivate matrimony and your estate* : The Beau is chafing the Man in Black. It may be a sly dig at the Man in Black, who at the time was carrying on his courtship with the pawn-broker's widow. It may also be that the Beau was merely using a commonplace expression of chafing. Note how the same verb *cultivate* is used with two nouns, 'matrimony' and 'estate' as object. The verb bears one meaning viz. try to bring about with reference to *matrimony*, while it means 'to till, to improve' with the object 'estate.' Such a use of the verb constitutes the figure of speech *zeugma*.

P. 75, l. 5. *Pinched up* : The Beau was up-to-date in all external fashions.

P. 75, l. 7. *A buckle studded with glass* : Being poor, he could not use diamonds on his buckles ; and so, glass served the purpose of diamonds.

P. 75, l. 9. *A sword* : The dandies still used to carry swords by their sides.

P. 75, l. 10. *Grown yellow by long service* : The original colour had changed into yellow, as they had been used for a long time. This points to the Beau's poverty.

P. 75, l. 13. *Complimented Mr. Tibbs* : The Man in Black flatters him that he is wearing the most fashionable dress and though his looks are really pale, the Man in Black says that the Beau appeared to be in bloom, rosy.

P. 75, l. 17. *Intimacy with the great* : The Beau would account for his blooming looks by his acquaintance—all imaginary—with the rich.

P. 75, l. 18. *A course of venison* : Venison is the flesh of deer, or animals taken in hunting.

P. 75, l. 18. *I despise the great* : Yet the Beau would profess to despise the rich only in words. But we know his true sentiments ; he is a snob.

P. 75, l. 20. *We must not quarrel with one half etc.* : In itself the sentiment in the remark is quite true.

P. 75, l. 21. *If they were all such as my lord Mudler etc.* : These words remind one of the observation of Swift that he hated the animal called man, though he liked particular individuals, Smith, John, etc. Note the significantly ridiculous name Lord Mudler (*Muddler*).

P. 75, l. 26. *hold gold to silver* : I bet, literally means, stake my gold against your silver.

P. 75, l. 27. *Poaching* : to poach, 'to trespass or intrude on another's preserves in order to steal game.' Here it means metaphorically to win secretly the love of, or *to seduce women*.

P. 75, l. 29. *I take a fine woman as some animals etc.* : Beau Tibbs evidently deludes himself that he is great lady-killer. What he says is quite funny but untrue. There was nothing corresponding to it in fact ; no woman would care to *poach* on him, or try to seduce him.

P. 76, l. 1. *improved* : made your pecuniary condition better ; brought money to you.

P. 76, l. 2. *Let it go no further* : It is not to be divulged to others ; —it is a great secret : This is a mannerism of Beau Tibbs. Almost every statement he makes is, as it were, a secret confided to his friend ; as if he is conferring a special honour on the Man in Black by taking him into his confidence.

P. 76, l. 5. *a tête-à-tête dinner* : a private dinner ; Tête-à-tête is a French expression, literally meaning 'head-to-head.'

P. 76, l. 10. *egad* : by God (ah + god).

P. 76, l. 14. *Lady Grogram* : The name is funny and suggestive of a stiffness of manners ; *grogram* is a coarse cloth of silk, mohair and wool, often *stiffened* with gum.

P. 76, l. 15. *An affected piece* : a woman full of affectation ; one whose manners are studied and artificial, assumed to show herself off as an aristocratic lady.

P. 76, l. 16. *assafoëtida* : a resinous gum is used in cookery and medicine, what is called 'हिंग' in Marathi.

P. 76, l. 19. *lend me a half-crown* : This is the 'forlorn burden' of his mechanical yet funny chatter. It is very pathetic to see the Beau, after all his tall talk of intimacy with aristocratic personages, descending to beg a loan of a half-crown.

P. 76, l. 20. *hearkee* : (hark ye), listen to me, mind.

P. 76, l. 27. *A coffee-house acquaintance* : A mere acquaintance, like acquaintance with a person whom one has met at a public place, like a coffee-house.

P. 77, l. 1. *countenances* : permits, makes allowance for, considering his young age, one would overlook his lightness of behaviour.

P. 77, l. 6. *undergo . . . contempt* : be treated with open and intentional contempt.

P. 77, l. 8. *Bugbear to fight* : 'fight' is a misprint for 'fright', i.e., to frighten.

## LETTER XXII.

This letter gives us another and fuller view of Beau Tibbs and of his worthy wife, Mrs. Tibbs. Mrs. Tibbs, too, just like her husband, keeps up the pose of being acquainted with the great and of moving in the midst of elegance and culture. Of course, we can see through the pretence very well, and so we enjoy the great incongruity between the fact and the pretensions.

This letter is a little masterpiece, and has been unanimously praised by critics. The character of Beau Tibbs shows little development, but it is expressed in new circumstances. To use a modern technical term, the Beau is a 'flat' character, and so, we at once know the important traits that go to the formation of the character. Yet there is interest in the actual presentation of the character, as a set of new circumstances is presented in which the same characteristics are revealed. A man of genius is required to work out the details of even a simple idea adequately and in surprisingly new way.

Though Beau Tibbs has been acquainted with the Chinese philosopher only very recently, yet he treated him, as if he were a bosom friend of long acquaintance. And so he invites him to his own house, where he could make an acquaintance with his wife ; "a fine, grave, sentimental companion"—one who "was bred, (but that is between ourselves), under the inspection of the countess of All-night." He also praises his own young daughter, Caroline Wilhelmina Amelia Tibbs, whom he designs for Lord Drumstick's eldest son. He also says that he is going to learn Greek that he may teach her. This information is imparted as a secret, to the Chinaman. [Somehow, Goldsmith seems to have forgotten all about this daughter, for we do not meet her, nor is anything told to explain her absence].

The Beau is living far away from the frequented parts, and in a garret, which he humorously calls 'the first floor under the chimney.' He prefers these lodgings because they give a charming

view of the whole country for a twenty miles round. He would not part with them for ten thousand guineas! When he inquires of the maid-servant where her lady is, the old Scotch hag informs him in her Scottish accents that she is washing his two shirts at the next door, as the neighbours would not lend their washing tub. So, all the pretensions of the Beau were dashed to pieces by this disclosure of his poverty. Far from being discontented at this he tells the Chinese philosopher that the maid-servant has no manners, even though she had formerly lived with a Scottish member of Parliament,—one of the politest men in the world! But, as usual, that was a secret. As the Chinese philosopher is looking at the furniture and pictures in the room, the Beau, pointing, to a bust drawn by himself, says that a countess had offered a hundred pounds for a copy of it though it has no exact likeness, and that he refused her, as merely to copy it, would be mechanical. After a while, Mrs. Tibbs, who is both a slattern and coquette, makes her appearance. She begs to be excused for appearing in dishabille as she had been the whole night at the gardens with the countess, who was very fond of the *horns*. The Chinese philosopher, however, has already heard where she was. Then the Beau tells her to prepare something elegant for dinner, and the wife proposes that it should be a pretty bit of ox-cheek, piping hot, with her own sauce. The husband entirely agrees with her, adding that he hates having “immense loads of meat—that is country all over”. We know that they could not afford it, but they pretend that it is vulgar, and not in keeping with high life, with which they were so well acquainted.

The philosopher, however, knowing too well what dinner could be expected at Tibbs', and being quite disgusted with their pretensions, made some excuse and took his leave.

P. 77, l. 13. *Whom it will be no easy matter, etc.*: 'Who would stick like a bur; but we do not wish that Beau Tibbs should be shaken off. He is such a delightful character.

P. 77, l. 18. *A pair of temple spectacles*: These appear to be the fashionable spectacles. It may be that the word 'temple' may be merely a trade-name; in that case, 't' should be written capital. It is also probable like the modern goggles, the spectacles



may be fitting the temples—the sides of the head between the forehead and the ear.

P. 77, l. 24. *Oddities* : queer traits ; eccentricities.

P. 77, l. 25. *He bowed, etc.* : even when he was not acquainted with them,—just to show to the Chinaman that he was acquainted with these great men.

P. 78, l. 5. *There's no company* : The Beau means to say that there is no high-class society, aristocratic company there, in the park.

P. 78, l. 9. *Lard*, 'Lord' : As it is impiety to take the name of God in oath, persons would slightly mispronounce the word, and thus use it as oath.

P. 78, l. 11. *Blast me, etc.* : If the world laughs at me, I, too, laugh at the world, and so we are quits. The world does not get any advantage over me. As a sentiment, it is fine ; but it is really deceiving oneself to think that the matter is thus over.

P. 78, l. 16. *Sentimental* : Goldsmith seems to use the word in the sense of 'intellectual'.

P. 78, l. 20. *inspection* : care and instruction.

P. 78, l. 20. *A charming body of voice* : Though the Beau praises her voice, it was far from being musical, as we shall soon see.

P. 78, l. 22. *Carolina Wilhelmina* : A character with the same Christian name is introduced in the 'Vicar of Wakefield'.

P. 78, l. 25. *Walks a minuet* : the correct word for 'minute' should be 'minuet' which means a slow graceful dance in triple measure.

P. 78, l. 33. *From some motives* : The Chinese philosopher may be ignorant, but the reader knows immediately that it was nothing but his poverty that he could not afford to live in better quarters. It may be also that he wanted to avoid creditors.

P. 79, l. 4. *For the benefit of the air* : Thus the Beau pretends, though everybody knows that he lives there, because of his poverty.

P. 79, l. 8. *prospects* : Wide views of landscape.

P. 79, l. 14. *to keep my prospects at home* : live in a house which commands a very wide and charming view,

P. 79, l. 17. *Facetiously* : humorously.

P. 79, l. 18. *The first floor down the chimney* : Instead of calling it a garret, the Beau humorously calls it 'the first floor, down the chimney', counting the floor from the chimney.

P. 79, l. 22. *Answered, etc.* : It shows that the old maid-servant was somewhat deaf.

P. 79, l. 23. *cautious reluctance* : cautious certainly she was to open the door, because she must have been afraid of a bailiff.

P. 79, l. 27. *Washing two shirts* : This information gives out the Beau completely, and his poverty is revealed very plainly.

P. 79, l. 28. *The tub* : The washing tub. The fact, that they had not even their own tub, is damaging enough.

P. 80, l. 11. *Wrought* : Embroidered.

P. 80, l. 13. *Japanned* : To 'Japan' is to varnish with lacquer after the manner of the Japanese.

P. 80, l. 18. *Grisoni* : Giuseppe Grisoni was born at Florence about 1700, and died in 1769. He excelled in portraiture and the painting of historical subjects.

P. 80, l. 19. *Though there, etc.* : We smile at the innocent but damaging admission. If there is no likeness, then the value of the portrait is nil.

P. 80, l. 20. *fellow* : copy.

P. 80, l. 21. *That would be mechanical* : It would not be an artistic, but merely a mechanical, labour ; and the Beau pretends to despise such base, mechanical work.

P. 80, l. 26. *in dishabille* : being partly or negligently dressed.

P. 80, l. 28. *Horns* : The French 'horns' were one of the features of the musical entertainment at Vauxhall Gardens. A horn is a wind instrument.

P. 80, l. 32. *You need . . . . neither* : The two negatives do not make a positive here, but merely emphasise a negative statement, 'neither need you make great preparations'.

P. 81, l. 1. *Elegant* : Nice, neat, pleasing to good taste.

P. 81, l. 1. *turbot* : a large kind of flat fish esteemed as food.

P. 81, l. 1. *Ortolan* : a small bird esteemed as a table delicacy.

P. 81, l. 7. *That is country all over* : Thoroughly vulgar ; mark the phrase 'all over'. It means thoroughly or entirely.

P. 81, l. 10-11. *The company of fools ... melancholy* : In life, but not in literature.

### LETTER XXIII.

In this essay, the Chinese philosopher comments on the state of literary criticism, and particularly rails against the rich and the aristocrats who seemed to be getting an undue share of respect from the public, not on account of their qualifications, but of their rank, and through flatterers they could maintain it. He wants to show that literature, as a profession, is not valued properly. And he concludes by remarking on the importance of men of letters as teachers in any polite society, or in a civilised country.

Whether Goldsmith had any reasons for this animus against the rich, we cannot say. But there seems to be a ring of sincerity in this account.

P. 81, l. 22. *Where the learned*, etc. : Perhaps a Utopian idea ; In China, there may or may not be such an academy, but it is immaterial to Goldsmith.

P. 81, l. 28. *No such tribunals* : In England, there is no official academy as in France. The subject has been often discussed, but the sound conclusion seems to be that such an institution is against the English spirit, and so its disadvantages would far outweigh its advantages.

P. 81, l. 30. *If any choose*, etc. : If a man becomes a critic merely by calling himself so, nothing would be simpler. These self-styled critics do not need any qualifications.

P. 82, l. 2. *Caitiff*. A low, mean fellow. The author was looked upon as a guilty person with a rope round his neck, brought before the literary judge, to be hanged or let loose as the judge may think fit. The 'classical' criticism, we may say, was thus judicial, and not appreciative, criticism.

P. 82, l. 6. *leading the way here* : i.e. dominating.

P. 82, l. 8. *interest* : influence.

P. 82, l. 8. *Brow-beating* : bearing down ; bullying. In this paragraph, Goldsmith humorously describes how the opinion of a great man at his table is circulated to the wider public. The details are all wittily set forth.



P. 82, l. 20. *Berne* : Berne is a city in Switzerland.

P. 82, l. 21. *Picardy* : An old province in the north of France.

P. 82, l. 23. *swayed* : influenced.

P. 82, l. 28. *dive into, etc.* : penetrate to the inner workings of the human heart.

P. 82, l. 29. *Forms* : Standards ; as the first form, etc. in a grammar school ; i.e. who have received but little education.

P. 82, l. 31. *Best of schools, etc.* : A man who learns in poverty, in a hard struggle with adverse circumstances, gets the best of education. Goldsmith himself had such an education, and that is why he complains against these who seemed to know no life but that of ease and pleasure.

P. 83, l. 1. *droning* : living an idle life.

P. 83, l. 9. *Rent-roll*. A roll or list of the names of his tenants and the rents they pay, etc. ; a dull catalogue.

P. 83, l. 15. *scrutiny* : close, careful examination.

P. 83, l. 16. *irremediable*, i.e. from which he can never come out, (lit. that cannot be cured), *obscurity* : remaining unknown.

P. 83, l. 17. *Having fed upon turtle* : Goldsmith hits upon an epigram ; it means that a man well-fed—fed upon turtle—is better than one who is well-read, who has digested Tully, i.e. Cicero. *Digested*, drew mental nourishment from the work of Cicero by studying them.

P. 83, l. 26. *Scraper* : One who scrapes, i.e., makes jarring harsh notes, while playing on a fiddle.

P. 83, l. 30. *the parallel drops* : the comparison ends ; there are no further points of similarity.

P. 83, l. 31. *The author by profession*. A poor author who lives on his writings, as opposed to an amateur, gets neither applause nor anything else ; we expect that like the fiddler, he would get, if not applause, at least coins, but the surprise of it is that he gets nothing.

P. 83, l. 33. *Auxiliary to* : in support of ; in a way helpful to.

P. 84, l. 3. *hardly* : hard, harshly. *every country, etc.* : Goldsmith's observation has indeed been borne out by history. *Polite* : refined.

P. 84, l. 8. *Brachmans* : Brahmins, i.e., Hindu priests. *Bonzes* : Chinese priests.



P. 84, l. 8. *Guebres* : Zoroastrians : Parsees.

P. 84, l. 9. *never so often* : however often.

P. 84, l. 10. *deceiving indolence, etc.* : turning by their delightful writings, ease-loving men into wise men ; influences the minds of the indolent for good, in spite of themselves.

P. 84, l. 11. *Profess amusement, etc.* : combine amusement and instruction ; instruct through amusement.

## LETTER XXIV

The Chinaman describes his visit, in company with the Man in Black, to an annual ('visitation') dinner where the priests meet their Bishop or ecclesiastic superior. The Chinaman describes with a suppressed feeling, but the force of the satire is in no way lessened by the outwardly quiet tone ; on the contrary, it is made far more biting. The introduction, at the end, of a hungry beggar, peeping through the window and blaming the company, is effective. The conclusion shows to what depths the priests, as a class, have sunk.

The Chinaman first explains the institution of visiting priests on the spot. It was a very good institution, but gradually it fell into disuse, because it was attended with various inconveniences to the superiors, and, instead of it, the annual visitation dinner was instituted where the priests themselves would assemble. With sly humour, the Chinaman remarks that the duty of half a year could be thus despatched in a day, and complaints, if any, could be summarily despatched !

The Chinaman, assuming the pose of simplicity, says that he expected such an assemblage to be an intellectual feast like those described by Xenophon and Plato. He was not much surprised at the ruddy countenances of the English priests, because he knew that they do not set much value on mortification of flesh. The long silence is not broken, till the dinner begins to be served. Even then, he thinks that it is to be merely a prelude to something intellectual. But he is utterly disappointed when he finds all the conversation tending to exclamation, or a talk about paltry details, about wine, pigs, etc. Then he tells us that the priests began to overeat themselves and that they did so because most of them are abstemious with regard to wine and women,

The Chinaman was disgusted at the sight of these gluttons, and wondered what they would say, if a hungry beggar were to peep at a window, and reprimand them that they were really eating his share and the share of others like him. The beggar would warn them that the world regards the excesses of its teachers with a critical eye, and notes their conduct with double severity. But the priests are insensible to all such criticism. They would say only that they preached for the world, and the world would pay them for their preaching, whether they like or dislike each other.

P. 84, l. 18. *Speculative temper*, etc.: The two strains are very happily characterised; the topics are selected because the Chinaman has something philosophical to say, or because they satisfy his natural curiosity, or, we may add they do both. *Speculative*, given to *speculating*, i.e. meditating upon any subject or matter to form theories or opinions.

P. 84, l. 20. *Visitation dinner*: feast held in honour of a *Visitation*, i.e. the official visit of inspection esp. bishop's examination of his diocese.

P. 84, l. 22. *The principal priests*: the bishops and the dignitaries of the church.

P. 84, l. 25. *Whether their temples*, etc.: that was the object of the visit. *laity*: laymen; persons who are not in holy orders.

P. 84, l. 27. (onwards) In this paragraph, the Chinaman slyly points out why such a good custom was abandoned and modified; it was inconvenient to the superior clergymen.

P. 84, l. 30. *To solicit preferment*: They were hankering after promotion themselves, and so they were neglecting their proper duties of supervising their subordinates. *Preferments*: advancement; promotion to a position of higher honour or benefit.

P. 85, l. 1. *Out of the road*, etc.: It would not help their promotion; the concrete metaphor makes the idea clearer.

P. 85, l. 2. *Gout*: This disease was generally due to over-eating, and so it is slyly hinted here as a disease peculiar to the priests and so associated with their high living. *Bad wine, ill-dressed provisions*—used ironically for 'excellent wine and rich delicacies.'

P. 85, l. 8. *By this means* etc.: The sarcasm in the remark is very caustic; the work of half a year is 'done in a day, but at

what expense ! Nobody, on his senses, could say that it was well done. On the contrary, it was a scamping way of doing a useful piece of work.

P. 85, l. 13. "*Accuse themselves*" : This does not mean that they admit their own remissions in duty, but that they themselves blame the congregation, which they could do very easily, as the people themselves were not present there to put up their own case against the real defaulters.

P. 85, l. 18. *Sentimental* : Intellectual.

P. 85, l. 19. *Xenophon and Plato* : Greek philosophers, who lived in the 4th century B.C.

P. 85, l. 22. *Apprised* : Given to understand ; informed.

P. 85, l. 25. *Mortification* : Mortification of flesh i.e., self-inflicted pain, suffering, abstinence by which the flesh, i.e. human passions, sensual appetites etc. are subdued.

P. 85, l. 30. *Florid* : Ruddy.

P. 85, l. 31. *Corpulency* : Corpulence, fatness. *Sedentary* : inactive (lit, accustomed to sitting).

P. 86, l. 3. *Silence* etc. : Silence never betrays a man ; a man is easily exposed, when he begins to talk, but if he holds his tongue, he may pass off for a learned man.

P. 86, l. 10. *Sow* : A female pig.

P. 86, l. 11. *At a litter*. At one time when she gave birth.

P. 87, l. 1. *poignant* : pointed, sharp ; (of course, used ironically.)

P. 87, l. 8. *Flummery* : an acid jelly made from the husks of oats. It is to be noted that the man was so much interrupted that the anecdote could not be completed as all were engrossed with the dinner.

P. 87, l. 17. *gulped down*, etc. : Note how the same verb is used with, the two objects 'disappointment', and 'tale'.

P. 87, l. 24. *Edifying* : Instructive ; the word is ironically used.

P. 87, l. 27. *Abridged* : prevented from indulging in.

P. 87, l. 30. *Their other appetities* : The appetites of eating ; thus the principle of compensation is suggested. Men sometimes justify excess in this way.

P. 88, l. 3. *A debauch in wine* : Goldsmith seems to consider excessive drinking better than over-eating, or gluttony, which is

a mark of the beast ; i.e. is considered beastly. *Debauch*, excessive indulgence.

P. 88, l. 11. *The soul . . . mortal* : The soul, sinks into earthiness ; becomes grossly material and it seems to forget its divine qualities.

P. 88, l. 14. *lethargic* : sleepy.

P. 88, l. 19. *All that you eat*, etc. : Almost a socialistic sentiment.

P. 88, l. 21. *Oppress yourselves* : Overload your stomach and feel discomfort from over-eating.

P. 88, l. 23. *the unsavoury return*, etc : the unpleasant consequences, i.e., discomfort, or suffering, caused by indigestion.

P. 88, l. 25. *nor the cushions* : i.e., you are as deaf as the cushions you sit upon.

P. 88, l. 30. *Character* : reputation ; good name.

P. 88, l. 32. *We'll preach for the world*. We do the job of preaching for the world, and are paid for it.

## LETTER XXV.

The story of Hingpo and Zelis has taken a sudden happy turn. After their escape, Hingpo writes to his father, giving an account of what immediately preceded it. The change in the tone of the letters comes as an unexpected surprise, and is, therefore, all the more enjoyable.

Hingpo writes to say that he is very happy because of his escape, with Zelis, from the clutches of his master, Mostadad. He gives the details of the escape thus :—

As the preparations for the marriage were going on, Zelis came to him secretly and implored for his help. He promised her, but they were betrayed. So the affair had almost disastrously ended, when suddenly, on the morning of the marriage, a large party of Circassian Tartars invaded the town. All was confusion, and in it, Hingpo made his escape with Zelis and reached the city of Terki.

Higpo, then assures his father that he has been behaving very virtuously, and has more respect or awe than love for Zelis. How very different, he remarks, is a woman who has cultivated her understanding from the women of the East who care only for



their physical charms? Thus an indirect compliment to Christian ladies—the ladies of the West, and particularly, of England—is conveyed here.

P. 89, l. 5. *Terki* : probably, an imaginary city. Goldsmith, as we know, is often inaccurate in his details.

P. 89, l. 9. *Dilated* : expanded, opposite of shrinking.

P. 89, l. 19. *Undiscovered* : Without being observed or seen.

P. 89, l. 22. *Aerial genius* : Angel.

P. 89, l. 25. *Symphony* : music. (lit. harmony of musical sounds).

P. 90, l. 9. *ceremony* : formalities.

P. 90, l. 25. *dispose of me*, etc. : sell me as a slave, and thus satisfy his greed.

P. 91, l. 2. *When we were informed* : In this story the long arm of accident is stretched at the opportune moment. In a romantic story we are prepared to meet such accidents and surprises.

P. 91, l. 14. *Courses* : The word ought to have been '*coursers*' horses.

P. 91, l. 19. *We enjoy*, etc. : Hingpo wants to say that their relations are consistent with virtue *i.e.*, as they are not married, they do not live like man and woman.

P. 91, l. 23. *Tenderness* : love.

## LETTER XXVI.

In this letter, we come across some three anecdotes or apologies. The essayists, from the days of Addison, have always drawn on this unfailing source for enlivening their serious, moral discourses. On the whole, we admire Goldsmith's skill in narrating these stories; but some of them appear commonplace to us.

The Chinaman first expresses his sense of relief at the news of his son's liberty. He advises him to persevere in prudence—to persevere in virtue; which would make his old age happy. He warns him against seeking advice from too many men, and also changing his profession too often. As an illustration, he tells a story, (not very convincing,) of a tailor and a conjurer. Though the conjurer knew a hundred tricks, he could hardly maintain

himself whereas the tailor who knew one trade was able to support even the conjurer, who met with failure, in spite of his knowing a hundred tricks.

Then the Chinaman proceeds to advise his son never to get angry, till he becomes rich, or till his anger can be effective. Once more, he tells another story of a goose and a mastiff. The story is poor indeed, for, it does not drive the lesson home.

Lastly, comes his exhortation that he should not try to please one and all, but should be satisfied if only he can please a few. This advice is enforced by a striking anecdote of a painter. A commonplace story is told here in a new and fresh way. The painter was satisfied, if he could please half the people, not caring for the opinion of the other half. What would strike some people as defective, would be appreciated by others as full of beauties. One cannot please all. This worldly moral is thus neatly driven home. Indeed the last anecdote redeems what would have been otherwise a very ordinary and discursive essay.

The point about all the stories is the surprise end. Goldsmith seems to know instinctively this technical device of the short-story, perfected by O'Henry and other Americans.

P. 92, l. 10. *Perseverance in prudence* : The Chinaman wants to say that if his son is prudent, he has every virtue required at this stage of his life. For him, prudence would include every virtue. *Prudence* : Prudence in all things and particularly in the choice of a career is what is required.

P. 92, l. 15. *None are better qualified* : Cynically, the Chinaman remarks that he himself never followed any advice when he was young. (Nothing is gained by such a remark ; it is merely a pose.)

P. 92, l. 18. *Even though, etc.* : He is offering the advice not as a father, ever entitled to advise, but in a general capacity. *Waive* : give up what is possessed as a right ; not to insist upon.

P. 92, l. 20. *The most usual way etc.* : a well-known and oft-quoted passage.

P. 92, l. 22. *To ask advice etc.* : It is generally pointed out that in seeking advice, men generally do not stop till they get the advice they want, and not the advice they need. Hence

this seeking of advice, now from one man, then from another, usually makes the matter worse.

P. 93, l. 3. *The least manageable* : Usually, the faculties are compared to horses, and the intellect or reason to the rider. So, it is easy for a man to control or manage himself better, if the mind is not very impulsive or capricious.

P. 93, l. 16. *If at any time etc.* : But irony of things is that the conjurer himself is reduced to beggary.

P. 93, l. 18. *made a shift to live* : anyhow managed to maintain himself.

P. 93, l. 28. *The resentment etc.* : A striking and apt illustration.

P. 93, l. 31. *empty menaces* : threats which cannot be carried out.

P. 94, l. 1. *excessively punctilious* : 'Punctilious' means attending to the smallest details or particulars ; too nice or exact. Here the word is used in the sense of 'So very particular about only the work in hand, as not to brook the slightest interference.'

P. 94, l. 7. *Insidious* : lying in wait to catch ; proceeding sicalthily to attack. *Scamper* : to run with speed and alarm.

P. 94, l. 14. *A pox take thee* : Pox is small-pox. It is one of the strong oaths, generally used for a curse. *For a fool* : as you are a fool.

P. 94, l. 17. *Get thine head etc.* : Your head will be bitten off, suddenly. The dog, however, suppressed his anger, as his master was near.

P. 94, l. 27. *Universal satisfaction* : satisfaction to all.

## LETTER XXVII.

Journalists are sometimes hard pressed for matter, and so occasionally they turn every experience of theirs, everything that happened to them, serious or trivial, to account. Goldsmith here draws upon one of his numerous experiences, a chance meeting with a cobbler.

In this letter, the Chinese philosopher describes one of his experiences in London—a chance meeting with a philosophic cobbler. He begins by telling us that he is fond of occasionally

mixing with the crowd and merge his own personality, for the time being, with it. Once, therefore, he made one in the crowd which had assembled to see the entry of a foreign ambassador. While struggling to make his way through the crowd, his shoe was so torn that he was unable to walk further. Fortunately, he caught sight of a cobbler, who seemed to be indifferent to what was going forward and quite intent on his work. The sight of such a philosophic cobbler roused the Chinaman's curiosity. Going up to him, the Chinaman asked him to mend his shoe. The cobbler began to do his work with his usual calm. The Chinaman asked him how he could pursue his work so calmly in the midst of such an exciting scene. The philosophic cobbler told him that he could not afford the luxury of sight-seeing or tramping. If he were to neglect his tools—his only friends—the world would neglect him. As regards his history, he had travelled, only from street to street, in the same parish and so like a rolling stone, had not gathered much moss. Indeed, he lost his clientele by this habit of his. Being asked if he has ever been married, he recounted the experiences of his marriage. His married life extended over sixteen years. His wife had wrong notions of saving. She would stint and starve both herself and her husband. The natural result of it was that the cobbler was at last driven in desperation to the ale-house, where he contracted a large debt. The sight of the bill presented by the landlady broke the heart of his wife. The cobbler searched the whole stall for her savings but the money could not at all be found!

It is these freaks of fortune that set us thinking. There is no doubt an ironic justice in life ; yet sometimes, the irony is too grim, as here.

P. 95, l. 22. *Pageant* : A brilliant spectacle, especially a procession, arranged for effect.

P. 95, l. 28. *A foreign ambassador* : a diplomatic minister, sent by one sovereign power to another.

P. 96, l. 2. *Cavalcade* : a company of men on horseback.

P. 96, l. 3. *Happened to tread etc.* : Goldsmith purposely introduces such a petty accident, just to give an air of realism, and also as a counterblast to descriptions of a dignified event.

P. 96, l. 19. *I own his want etc.* : Note the antithesis.



P. 96, l. 21. *Philosophic* : thoughtful ; showing calmness in disturbing or trying circumstances.

P. 96, l. 28. *For those that like them* : A truism, expressed so naturally, by the cobbler.

P. 97, l. 1. *What should I, etc.* : Once more a true, commonplace, but convincing observation.

P. 97, l. 6. *God has called me, etc.* : These words show his perfect contentment with his own lot.

P. 97, l. 10. *last* : A wooden or other mould of the foot on which boots and shoes are made or repaired.

P. 97, l. 15-16. *When I ever . . . my work* : Once more a perfectly true observation.

P. 97, l. 19. *Whom Nature has etc.* : That is, one, who, by sheer experience, had acquired contentment which a philosopher acquires by thought and study, and who had acquired the habit of generalising from his own experience. A philosopher requires two faculties : that of going to the root of the matter, and generalising accurately ; and secondly, that of living philosophically, in a calm, contented way.

P. 97, l. 26. *Parish* : A district under one pastor ; an ecclesiastical district.

P. 97, l. 27. *But three times* : Except on three occasions ; we do not know what these were and where he had been on these occasions.

P. 97, l. 30. *Some unforeseen misfortune* : That is how the natural philosopher would interpret. Many of us would however, attribute it to the spirit of restlessness.

P. 98, l. 6. *migrations of a man by the fire-side* : Change of place in the same locality.

P. 98, l. 16. *She had a hard spirit* : She was unyielding, stubborn.

P. 98, l. 21. *Who hated home etc.* However opposed to the conventional sentiment about home, it represents the hard truth. Many find their homes unbearable and want to escape from them.

P. 98, l. 22. *Run in score* : 'Score' is generally a mark or notch for keeping account, hence 'a debt, or arrears.'

P. 98, l. 25. *the length of it* : The bill was so long, contained so many items, that it gave a shock to the wife's heart.

P. 98, l. 30. *Artist* : The cobbler is humorously called *An Artist*, one expert in the art of mending shoes.

P. 98, l. 32. *To lengthen out the amusement* : to continue to enjoy the pleasure for a longer time.

### LETTER XXVIII.

This is one of the most remarkable essays and the more we read it, the more we appreciate it. We are struck by the originality of Goldsmith's outlook and his insight into life. None but Goldsmith, who had bitter experience of poverty and who yet retained his sweet temper, could have shown such insight into the real nature of poverty. The homily is written, not by a bookish, but by a worldly-wise philosopher. Apart from the matter, the manner of the essay deserves all praise. It is a veritable prose-lyric on poverty. Of course, the influence of the eighteenth century classical manner is too strong, but that is because Goldsmith heartily approved of the manner. We must, therefore, accept the manner, and judge Goldsmith by the excellence he achieved in it.

First, the Chinese philosopher properly warns his son against accepting all the philosophy of life set forth in books. Those who form their ideas of life from books only, get wrong ideas about it. In their self-confidence, they face life boldly, but come to a disastrous end. Where they go wrong is that they think that men are either completely virtuous or completely vicious, while in actual life, there is a strange mixture of virtue and vice in every man. Hence their romantic friendships are soon broken, and discord and hatred involve them in unexpected troubles. Then they naturally think that they can face poverty as the philosophers teach that they should. But actually they find that it is difficult to maintain the pose of poverty, when the world is not looking on. The applause of the world is never given to the poor, and so they are forced to retire to solitude and gradually become misanthropic. It is generally said that those who retire to solitude, are either beasts or angels, but the essayist says that they are neither ; they are generally discontented beings, who began their life without experience and did not gain it in their intercourse with mankind.

P. 99, l. 4-5. Note the antithetical manner : for example—"respect the interest of others" and "unmindful of our own",

P. 99, l. 11. *Grows enamoured of distress* : Goldsmith complains bitterly of these sentimental authors who glorify poverty in unnatural colours. Such complaint is rare, yet how necessary it appears. It is generally the wrong philosophy, the wrong values that mislead the young.

P. 99, l. 13. *Till he severely feels them* : Sooner or later, the sufferings of poverty become unbearable. You cannot philosophise away poverty or the sufferings of poverty. The stern realities of life assert themselves, however much one may try to clothe them in the false romantic colours

P. 99, l. 17. *The vulgar errors of the wise* : The wise, in their own way, are prone to certain kinds of errors : Goldsmith, therefore, calls them the vulgar errors of the wise. The errors are errors, whether committed by the ignorant or by the wise. The errors of the wise are particularly to be guarded against.

P. 99, l. 26. *Unerring integrity* : unfailing uprightness or honesty.

P. 100, l. 3. *In lawn* : In the priests ; 'lawn' is a fine kind of linen worn by the clergy.

P. 100, l. 3. *In fetters* : in prisoners.

P. 100, l. 6. *Romantic friendships* : Friendships that are too ardent, or expect impossible loyalties, as described in romances.

P. 100, l. 10. *More than retaliate the injury* : The meaning is that they not only retaliate the injuries, but inflict greater injuries.

P. 100, l. 13. *To espouse* : to embrace, as a cause ; to look upon his quarrel as their own.

P. 100, l. 22. *Come then, O Poverty !* : This impassioned apostrophe could easily be put into verse form. It is poetic in sentiment and expression, and is wanting only in the poetic rhythm.

P. 100, l. 25. *Cincinnatus* : Cincinnatus was called from the plough in 458 A.D. to save the Roman Army which was blockaded by Algui on Mt. Algidus. He was made dictator, and he defeated the enemy and returned to his farm. He is often referred to as type of the old-fashioned Roman simplicity and frugality.

P. 100, l. 30. *For Poverty ever comes at the call* : How true the observation is, though the humour of it is grim.

P. 100, l. 32, *As when* : Almost a Homeric simile. Such an elaborate poetic simile is in keeping with the tone of the passage. It is well worked out.

P. 101, l. 4. *Icicles* : Hanging, tapering piece of ice formed by the freezing of dropping water. Here 'cold or chill.'

P. 101, l. 7. *Contempt, with pointing finger* : A conventional personification in the classical style.

P. 101, l. 12. *In all the majesty of solitude* : The words are almost ironical. As Goldsmith means, there is hardly any majesty or grandeur in such a solitude.

P. 101, l. 20. *He disguises his feelings* : In his heart of hearts, he feels the sting of misfortune, and if he thus feels, he cannot have the satisfaction of self-applause—of having overcome, like a philosopher, the anguish of his soul. He is only pretending that he has conquered his feelings ; that is dissimulation. So he cannot have the satisfaction either way. If he is not affected by his calamities, it is insensibility on his part, and so there is no special credit in rising superior to calamities. On the other hand, if he is sensitive and feels them keenly, he does not, as a matter of fact, rise superior to them, and so he cannot claim any credit. He is only deceiving the world. His own mind does not applaud him, in either of the two alternatives.

P. 101, l. 22. *Spleen* : Ill-humour or anger. Spleen is a soft, pulpy, blood-modifying gland, near the large extremity of the stomach, supposed by the ancients to be the seat of anger and melancholy.

P. 101, l. 22. *Distinguishing* : Discriminating properly.

P. 101, l. 27. *The censure* : that he is a beast.

P. 101, l. 27. *The praise* : That he is an angel.

P. 101, l. 30. *Gain it* : acquire experience.

P. 101, l. 30. *Intercourse* : Dealings ; or connection by dealings.

## LETTER XXIX.

To appreciate this letter properly, we must bear in mind some historical facts. It appears that there was more or less an epidemic of mad dogs. It was suspected that the dogs had gone mad, and so it was thought essential to protect the public from the dog-bite, to put the dogs under restraint or to shoot the straggling ones. A government order to that effect—Order in Council—was



being carried out with unnecessary cruelty in London. Horace Walpole remarked : " In London, there is a more cruel campaign than that waged by the Russians ; the streets are the very picture of the murder of the innocents ; one drives over nothing but poor dead dogs."

We can well understand the indignation which a sensitive man like Goldsmith felt at such a slaughter of dogs. He could not also help laughing at the ridiculous excesses into which the public ran. And hence, here was a timely article on a current topic. It shows Goldsmith's humanitarianism at its best.

We enjoy many of the details in the essay, as we know the facts as well as the distortion of them. Goldsmith concludes with the sensible remark that even if there were some truth in a few dogs having gone mad, we should not forget the great service the dog has been rendering, and be grateful to this faithful and trusty friend of man

If some of us do not, at first reading, like the essay, it is because we think that the subject is too trivial, and it appears to be an outcome of the Chinaman's own imagination, and his love of exaggeration. But when we know the facts from history, we see the essay in the proper perspective. However, the ridicule is not very highly successful : it seems to miss the mark somewhere. Yet the essay received the compliment of being published in another contemporary paper.

The Chinaman first remarks that England is happy in that it is not a prey to a famine and the other like natural ravages. Yet the English suffer from false rumours, from false terrors or, as the Chinaman puts it, from " the epidemic terror." This season, the epidemic is the dread of mad dog. He humorously describes how all men are suspicious of a mad dog at every street-corner and go almost fully armed to meet the danger. Then he tells an effective anecdote about the witches. The people's way of dealing with the witch was very absurd so that, in either event, the witch lost her life. So a dog, when surrounded by the people and teased by them, would either snap at men or run away. In either alternative he would be judged to be a mad dog.

Then the Chinaman humorously describes the stages of this national disease—how a story begins to circulate, and gradually goes on accumulating details. Nobody seems to go to the root

of the matter, and all merely go on circulating the details. A very fine illustration is supplied by what the Chinaman heard from his land-lady. A mad dog had bit a farmer, who becoming mad, ran into his own yard and bit a fine brindled cow. The cow quickly became as mad as the man, and walked about on her hind legs, sometimes barking like a dog, and sometimes attempting to talk like the farmer. Such rumours merely make the people miserable, and induce the very symptoms which they fear. The letter is concluded with a fine praise of the dog. A dog, says one of the English poets, "is an honest creature and I am a friend to dogs." How unkind and how ungrateful it is to torment such an animal!

P. 102, l. 6. *Epidemic* : A disease that attacks a great number in one place at one time, and travels from place to place ; a widespread outbreak.

P. 102, l. 10. *The brown bosom* : Transferred epithet ; the sand is brown.

P. 102, l. 21. *This peculiar malady, though well-known etc.* : Though the Englishmen do not name it, yet foreign observers, like the Chinaman himself, can well call it an 'epidemic terror'. This innocent wrong nomenclature is humorous. Goldsmith's meaning is plain. He wants to say that the public occasionally suffers from these rumours of terror. In the next para., he gives a few concrete illustrations, which make his point clear. Sometimes, it is the terror of the comet, at another time it is the fear of the French invasion. But, as the Chinaman would say, it is the epidemic terror.

P. 102, l. 28. *Flat-bottomed boat* : A transport ship. There was continual fear of French invasion in flat bottomed boats, during the Seven Years' War (1756-63).

P. 102, l. 29. *The people etc.* : The sentence describes finely the state of the people in their excitement.

P. 103, l. 3. *Sow* : metaphorically used.

P. 103, l. 4. *Consternation* : Terror which throws into confusion.

P. 103, l. 11. *Under malignity of its influence* : Its malign influence. 'Malign' means 'of evil disposition ; unfavourably'.

P. 103, l. 14. *The beadle* : A petty officer of a parish with power of punishing offences.

P. 103, l. 14. *Halter* : a rope to hang with.

P. 103, l. 15. *Boots and buff gloves* : Boots and thick gloves were thought a preservative against the bite of a mad dog.

P. 103, l. 17. *The whole people stand bravely* : The words are evidently ironical.

P. 103, l. 28. *Devoted* : Doomed.

P. 103, l. 28. *If he attempts etc.* : Whether it snaps or whether it runs away, it is judged to be a mad dog.

P. 104, l. 10. *To be dipped* : A favourite remedy for a bite.

P. 104, l. 12. *Congealed with* : Frozen with ; here the idea is that from shuddering, their horror reaches a higher stage, when they seem to stare, almost hypnotised.

P. 104, l. 18. *Saw the lap-dog etc.*, : The meaning is not clear. Anyhow the details are absurd, and they set us smiling.

P. 105, l. 5. *Slaver* : To let the saliva run out of the mouth.

P. 105, l. 14. *Brindled cow* : Cow, marked with spots or streaks.

P. 105, l. 17. *Barking like a dog etc.* : Being bitten by a mad dog, the victim barks like a dog ; here, inasmuch as the cow was bitten by the farmer who, in his own turn, had been bitten by a mad dog, she should naturally exhibit symptoms derived from both—that she should bark like a dog and talk like the farmer ! We cannot help smiling at such an absurd detail.

P. 105, l. 28. *Frenzy* : Violent excitement ; mania.

P. 106, l. 6. *A dog, says etc.* : It is generally thought that the poet referred to is Otway. The correct quotation is

Pierre :

“ A friend to dog, for they are honest creatures.

And never betray their masters ; never fawn

On any that they love not.”

P. 106, l. 16. *In him alone jawning is not flattery* : A dog never fawns on those it dislikes ; so his fawning is genuine.

### LETTER XXX.

In this letter, the Chinese philosopher tells his son that Fortune is not really blind, whatever these Europeans may say. For she is never seen favouring certain persons, or haunting certain places. She could have done so, sometimes at least, if she were really blind. This observation is characteristic of Goldsmith and shows his independence of outlook,

The Chinaman then advises his son that he should learn to save even small sums. He should not be avaricious and desire to get rich all at once, but to add patiently farthing to farthing. He, therefore, tells him a story from one of the books of Chinese learning. The story is that of one Whang—an avaricious miller who dreamed that there was a treasure-trove beneath the foundation of his mill. In his eagerness to get suddenly rich he tried to dig it out, but not only did he not find any treasure, but even brought down his mill. In grasping at all, he lost even what he had.

P. 106, l. 23. *The Europeans themselves are blind* : because they cannot see the plain facts.

P. 106, l. 23. *Fortune without sight* : Fortune is generally represented as blind, because there is no law which governs invariably the favours of fortune.

P. 106, l. 27. *Close pursuers* : Persons who pursue her hard or are too much after her.

P. 106, l. 30. *Discerning* : Discriminating.

P. 107, l. 2. *Whose pocket holes are laced with gold* : The image is not so very clear, though the meaning is obvious 'from whose pocket gold is falling.'

P. 107, l. 6. *Industry* : A common personification of an abstract idea ; it means 'industrious persons'.

P. 107, l. 7. *A coach and six* : A coach drawn by six horses, a sign of great wealth.

P. 107, l. 26. *Despising small sums, and grasping at all* : Not caring for patiently saving small amounts but trying to get rich all at once.

P. 107, l. 28. *Avaricious* : Extremely covetous or greedy.

P. 107, l. 32. *He stood . . . a child of mine* : 'he stood god-father to a child of mine.' Among Christians, children have god-fathers after whom they are mostly named. But is it a Chinese custom ?

P. 108, l. 7. *stood and went* : was working.

P. 108, l. 10. *His acquisitions . . . desires* : He did not earn as much as he desired.

P. 108, l. 11. *above want* : 'above', out of the reach of. He was never in want, was in pretty easy circumstances,



P. 108, l. 15. *Three nights running before* : for the last three consecutive or successive nights.

P. 108, l. 16. *were daggers to the heart of Whang* : made him feel very bitter and miserable.

P. 108, l. 26. *Assiduity* : Diligence ; constant application.

P. 108, l. 31. *indulged with* : gratified by giving (what he longed for).

P. 108, l. 31. *wished for* : as the psycho-analyst would say a 'wish dream'.

P. 109, l. 9. *past a doubt* : beyond doubt ; quite certain.

P. 109, l. 10. *Mattock* : A kind of pickaxe for loosening the soil, having the iron ends broad, instead of pointed.

P. 109, l. 24. *Agony of joy* : paroxysm of joy. Her joy was so intense that it almost threw her into a fit.

### LETTER XXXI.

In this letter we come upon a very diverting comedy of pseudo-good-breeding. The principal characters are Beau Tibbs and his wife, who with their pretensions to gentility, succeed in snubbing the pawn-broker's widow. The stage is well set, and everything is realistic enough. All circumstances are so arranged as to bring out oppositions of character very artistically. One day, the Chinese philosopher is invited to join a party to visit the Vauxhall gardens. The party consists of the Man in Black, his lady love—a pawn-broker's widow, and Mr. and Mrs. Tibbs. They all decide to go in a coach which is too small to carry five persons. Mr. and Mrs. Tibbs are so poor, that they cannot hire an additional carriage, and Beau Tibbs consents to sit in the lap of his wife ! What a farcial situation ! Again, the pretensions of Mr. and Mrs. Tibbs are aired over and over again, so that by mere repetition, they succeeded in imposing on the vulgar pawn-broker's widow. Their success is so complete that the widow is at last prepared only to listen and to improve. Hence constrained by good manners, she has to listen to the song of Mrs. Tibbs. But the waterworks, which it has been her heart's desire to see, have already begun and were finished, just when the song is concluded. The disappointment of the widow knows no bounds and so, all the pseudo-good-breeding, which she had been acquiring, leaves her, and she expresses her displeasure in the openest manner, and insists upon going home immediately. This

outburst of the widow which is in the nature of an anti-climax, comes just too late, and that is what we enjoy in this situation.

Not only is this main comedy well set and properly developed, but every detail and every episode is in keeping with it. The Beau is true to his character from first to last. The Chinaman and we observe all with detachment and that is why the whole episode is so diverting to us.

Goldsmith's art in the management of the three characters Mr. Tibbs, Mrs. Tibbs, and the widow deserves all praise. The dialogues between the two women when they quarrel at first; and the words of Beau Tibbs when he gulps down the wine, are highly amusing. Even such a minor point as the description of the garden, and the different reactions are nicely managed. In short, judged from all points of views, the essay is a masterpiece and is deservedly famous. It is a foretaste of Goldsmith, the writer of successful comedies.

P. 110, l. 5. *As fond of walking* : Goldsmith in order to contrast the English and Chinese manners, makes his Chinese fond of riding.

P. 110, l. 7. *To a garden* : Vauxhall Gardens, with their music, paintings, supper-boxes, their Arabian Nights' splendours, and their thousand lamps were, for two centuries, a place of popular and of fashionable evening resort, for Londoners. In 1760, Vauxhall Gardens were, during the summer, a favourite place for evening entertainment, particularly to the respectable tradesmen of the prosperous middle class.

P. 110, l. 9. *Concert* : Musical entertainment.

P. 110, l. 15. *My friend* : The Man in Black.

P. 110, l. 15. *Superlative* : of the highest degree ; excessive.

P. 110, l. 17. *which was formerly new* : humorous for 'which was very old'.

P. 110, l. 20. *Green damask, with three gold rings* : The gaudy colour and the excessive ornaments reveal clearly the vulgarity of the widow.

P. 110, l. 23. *Hat as big as an umbrella* : shows the fashions of the time somewhat exaggerated and made ridiculous.

P. 110, l. 25. *To the water* : to going by boat or by barge. This was the customary approach, as the Gardens were on the Surrey side of the water.

P. 110, l. 26. *A little in flesh* : Somewhat fat.

P. 110, l. 28. *Mr. Tibbs consented to sit in his wife's lap* : We laugh at the absurdity ; their poverty was so great that they could not afford to engage two coaches. Mr. Tibbs sits in the lap of his wife ! One has to visualise such a picture to see its ludicrousness.

P. 110, l. 33. *Above the degree of a cheese-monger* : i.e., there would be only petty shop-keepers. The Beau as usual looks down upon the common people.

P. 110, l. 33. *This was the last night* : The Vauxhall season lasted from May to August. The Tibbs party visited the gardens presumably on the last night of August, 1760. This letter appeared originally in the Public Ledger on September 2nd, following.

P. 111, l. 2. *Nobility and gentry from Thames-street* : Fishmongers and tailors, as these streets were mostly inhabited by them.

P. 111, l. 3. *Prophetic ejaculations* : sudden remarks which hinted darkly at what was to come.

P. 111, l. 4. *Inspired by the uneasiness* : The Chinaman slyly hints that the ejaculations were due to his uncomfortable position in the lap of his wife.

P. 111, l. 6. *I found every sense etc.* : So the Chinaman frankly admits that the scene was very delightful.

P. 111, l. 17. *If we except the virgins* : The only thing that is wanting is that there are no celestial virgins or Houris here.

P. 111, l. 19. *Mahomet's Paradise* : perhaps reminiscent of Addison's ecstasy : " I could not but look on the place as a kind of Mohametan Paradise."

P. 111, l. 20. *As for virgins* : He facetiously remarks that virgins are rarely to be found here. He uses the metaphor of a fruit. The humorous touch is slightly obscene. We do not expect this facetious touch in the Man in Black.

P. 111, l. 32. *Water-works* : The water-works was a moving landscape picture, with a stream of real water, represented in the Gardens, at about nine o'clock.

P. 112, l. 5. *Rudiments of breeding* : the primary lessons in good conduct and behaviour.

P. 112, l. 6. *Behind the counter* : in a shop.

P. 112, l. 6. *They could sit at the head of their own table* : They could afford to keep a good table, could get good dinners. This is a hit at the poverty of the Tibbs.

P. 112, l. 10. *Green goose* : i.e. a young goose,—a fowl ; Gooseberries are merely fruit ; though the word 'goose' is there, it is not a bird. So the retort is plain : some people,—Mrs. Tibbs among others—hardly knew what the meat of a bird is like. All that they knew of the goose is that they had eaten gooseberries.

P. 112, l. 15. *Supportable* : Just tolerable.

P. 112, l. 17. *A genteel box* : a box in which only genteel people could sit.

P. 112, l. 18. *In the very focus* : In the centre itself ; in a position to which all eyes would be turned.

P. 112, l. 19. *Though we are perfectly convinced etc.* : The sly dig is quite obvious. It was not their opinion, but the opinion of others that mattered.

P. 112, l. 24. *fixed, etc.* : took up our position in a place, remote from observation, i.e. a place, where only common people sat.

P. 112, l. 26. *The widow found the supper excellent* : It was quite natural, that the widow should find the supper very good, but equally natural that Mrs. Tibbs should assume the aristocratic pose, and declare it to be quite plain.

P. 112, l. 29. *Dressing* : Dressing of meat ; preparation of dishes.

P. 112, l. 30. *For Vauxhall dressing* : considering that the dishes were prepared at Vauxhall ; from the Vauxhall standard.

P. 112, l. 31. *Their wine etc.* : The irony of the situation is obvious.

P. 113, l. 2. *Her very senses were vulgar* : Her tastes were very low.

P. 113, l. 5. *To listen and improve* : Learn from them and grow better.

P. 113, l. 7. *To miserable refinement* : But they soon brought her to the opinion that it was bad from the point of refinement or culture. The meaning is, 'she would now feel that it was not good enough and she should be disgusted and feel miserable.'



P. 113, l. 8. *Praised the painting* : Concrete illustrations are given.

P. 113, l. 14. *Pretensions* : Claims.

P. 113, l. 23. *Particularly the widow* : That is the irony of the situation—that the widow herself should be responsible for the singing of Mrs. Tibbs, which was, in the end, to disappoint her.

P. 113, l. 28. *T'ot any except her husband* : All were dissatisfied, except Mr. Tibbs who naturally would be highly pleased with her own song.

P. 113, l. 30. *You must observe* : The Chinaman explains the point of good breeding or good manners.

P. 114, l. 2. *in state of petrification* : As if petrified ; as if turned to stone, i.e. quite motionless.

P. 114, l. 5. *The water-works were going to begin* : And so it was time for the Tibbs party to make a move.

P. 114, l. 7. *Repressed by the motives of good breeding* : She had to check herself, because it would be against good manners to interrupt.

P. 114, l. 11. *The widow's face gave me high entertainment* : I was highly amused to watch the struggle in her face. We can easily imagine the struggle in her mind between good breeding and curiosity. Her curiosity and anxiety not to miss the water-works impels her to get up and go away at once. But her false sense of good manners tells her that she must not move in the midst of the song.

P. 114, l. 19. *When the song was just concluded* : Another situation, full of irony and humour. The water-works took the usual time ; but Mrs. Tibbs's song was very long.

P. 114, l. 31. *The polite hours* : The time when the aristocratic company would arrive.

P. 114, l. 33. *The horns* : The French horns.

## LETTER XXXII.

In this letter we have some interesting and acute observations on books and authors—a subject of vital interest to Goldsmith. One suggestion particularly deserves notice, viz. : that the state should pay the authors as it does the priests. It is an interesting suggestion but it has not been carried into effect so far.

The Chinese philosopher first dwells on what strikes him as a paradox, that there should be a demand for new books, when there are already many old books which, though good, remain unread. Yet a moment's thought convinces him that the modern books too, serve on a useful purpose in their own way. Therefore, the production of new books is not an inconsistency or a wastage, but a sign of health. A comparison between old books and new books,—how they are treated—the former with respect, and the latter with intimacy and affection,—is finely worked out. The Chinaman then notes that the authors serve an important social purpose; they instruct the people, and as civilization advances, the task of imparting instruction can be performed only by authors. Hence the suggestion that the authors should be looked upon as modern priests and provided for, by the nation, as the priests are. How much Goldsmith, in his poverty, in his period of hack-work, must have longed for such an organization! Even in these days of State Socialism, no country has as yet established a regularly paid organisation of authors. Such an arrangement is not impossible, but the time has not as yet come.

The Chinaman then considers what leads the authors to write. It is either fame or money. He remarks that the pioneers in authorship got all fame cheaply, whereas their successors, finding it difficult to earn fame, wrote only for money. These remarks of Goldsmith appear to be weak generalisations and are unconvincing. The Chinaman then praises England because it is a country in which more new books are published than in all the rest of Europe. Hence, it is that Englishmen are liberal in their thought and outlook, "They have been often known to act like fools, they are generally found to think like men." Then the Chinaman points that a literary inquisition is more likely to injure than benefit society, but the danger may be obviated by the check exercised upon writers of inferior matter by the effective criticism of competent authors. Lastly, he compares the highly erotic French writers with the English and says that the English writers have at least good moral intentions, and that obscene and libidinous publications will not be countenanced by the English public. He concludes by remarking that there is still a nobler class of authors in England,—those who teach humanity. They deserve every honour from their community.

P. 115, l. 8. *Contradictions* : inconsistencies.

P. 115, l. 14. *inconsistence* : inconsistency.

P. 115, l. 19. *In possession of others* : The meaning is fairly clear ; *others*, i.e. the people who lived a different life and had different problems from ours.

P. 115, l. 22. The concrete illustration adds vividness to the style. Shonou was one of the most ancient emperors of China.

P. 115, l. 24-32. This paragraph contains a very fine comparison of the ancient and modern works.

P. 115, l. 24. *Medals* : coins, ancient coins, as opposed to current ones.

P. 115, l. 25. *To amuse the curious* : The analogy brings out this point very clearly.

P. 115, l. 27. *are prized*, etc. : a higher value is set on them than their real worth.

P. 115, l. 29. *are subject to*, etc. : are very severely criticised by critics, who lead a life of drudgery.

P. 115, l. 30. *Clipping compilers* : compilers, who in making up volumes, cut out portions from their work or mutilate them.

P. 115, l. 30. *The works of antiquity etc.* : Old books are praised but hardly read, while the modern books are read, but rarely praised.

P. 115, l. 32. *boast the passion* : are proud of our enthusiastic love of them.

P. 116, l. 2. *blush to own it* : are ashamed to admit that they are charming or delightful.

P. 116, l. 15. *Insinuating* : Insensibly, subtly winning goodwill or confidence. *Address*, manner.

P. 116, l. 16. *To a heart already relaxed* : The metaphor is that of a lover winning the heart of a refined woman. He can do so by his delicate, insinuating address ; but a clumsy lover would fail in the attempt. So similarly here, the readers have already reached a stage of refinement and if the authors are to get at the heart of such a cultured reader, they can do so only by their subtle, insinuating style.

P. 116, l. 17. *Books are necessary* : Goldsmith is quite right, when he notes that as the vices are changing, the means to combat and cure them must be changed. And new ways of curing new vices must be devised.

P. 116, l. 22. *instruments of reformation* : means by which society is reformed, refined.

P. 117, l. 2. *A polite age, etc.* : However high the merit of a writer may be, in civilised society of any time, it is impossible for him to win enduring fame.

P. 117, l. 10. *Those who came first* : A fallacious statement. Fame is not any fixed quantity, which would diminish by being taken away by the first writers. Of course, when there are too many claimants, the struggle for fame is keen, but at the same time, its value is greater.

P. 117, l. 15. *Temporal* : worldly.

P. 117, l. 20. *Sacerdotal* : That of the priests ; priestly.

P. 117, l. 23. *A spirit of freedom* : The English people are always guided by a spirit of freedom and reason.

P. 117, l. 24. *To act like fools* : This gratuitous opinion about the English people is, of course, to be taken lightly. It is said in good humour.

P. 117, l. 28. *Where writers are numerous etc.* : Goldsmith is quite right when he says that the authors act as checks upon one another.

P. 117, l. 29. *A literary inquisition* : An inquisition carried on by men of letters in their books, and not before any other public body. To be taken to task by other fellow-writers would be a severe punishment to a writer. That is the idea of a literary inquisition, of course, an academy or an official body may undertake such work.

P. 117, l. 30. *Inquisition* : Judicial inquiry ; a tribunal in the Roman Catholic church for the discovery, repression, and punishment, of heresy, unbelief and other offences against religion.

P. 118, l. 1. *The dullest writer talks of virtue* : The words appear to be unconsciously ironical ; as if mere talk of virtue, or wholesome advice, or a little useful information, would make him a good author.

P. 118, l. 5. *Magazine* : store.

P. 118, l. 7. *The dunces of France* : Goldsmith's prejudice seems to get the better of him. It is unbecoming for a 'citizen of the world' thus to be led away by his prejudices.

P. 118, l. 11. *Breaks in upon* : offends the moral feelings of.



P. 118, l. 13. *Fly to nobility for shelter* : Try to protect himself by securing their patronage.

P. 118, l. 18. *Regards* : Good wishes or affection ; the meaning is that they love and serve humanity with all their heart, just as ordinary men love and serve only themselves and those nearest and dearest to them.

### LETTER XXXIII.

This Essay which appears to be almost a transcript from Goldsmith's own life, vividly characterizes for us a successful salesman.

When we read the essay, we seem to know the salesman : so vividly and realistically he is portrayed. Goldsmith's power of creating a living portrait is thus displayed in this letter. But what is still more important is that it reveals Goldsmith, too : how he was very easily led by flattery, and how he must have been so often fooled in life. The sketch appears to be a transcript from life and Goldsmith does not mince matters when he seems to laugh at his own ugly face—(the Chinaman's face, too), and at his own weakness to withstand temptations. The public of Goldsmith's time always expected some instruction or some moral from every episode. But a literary artist like Goldsmith sometimes creates a character or an episode just for the beauty of it and not for its morals. The moral is merely tagged on.

Coming to the details, we notice the arts of the salesman. The Chinaman goes to the shop just to purchase some silk for his night-cap ; but he returns loaded with the silk-cloth, which he did not much approve of, with cloth for his waist-coat which he did not want for the time being, and with a morning gown, in addition, thus having spent all the available cash in his pocket. The Chinaman cannot, therefore, help reflecting, "The wisdom of the ignorant somewhat resembles the instinct of animals ; it is diffused in but a very narrow sphere, but within that circle it acts with vigour, uniformity and success."

If one may surmise the secret of this able salesman, it will be found first in winning the good opinion of the customer by his promptness and modesty ; secondly, in not contradicting any opinion expressed by the customer ; thirdly, in gentle sugges-

tions and flattery ; lastly, in gradually leading the customer to buy better and costly things. Delicate flattery, humouring the vanity of the customer and pretending to care for the customer's own interest, (while as a matter of fact, caring for his own)—these make up the secret of the salesman's success. A salesman who has these instinctively or acquires them by art, will go a long way, particularly with such simple customers like Goldsmith. Such simple customers are not the exceptions but the rule, as almost anybody can remember from his own personal experience. Given a clear salesman—or a sufficiently clever salesman—almost any man can be duped into purchasing things he does not want.

P. 118, l. 26. *A picture* : A sign-board.

P. 118, l. 28. *A board to assure the buyer* : Goldsmith is always at pains to contrast the English and Chinese manners. It almost appears ironical that the buyers should thus be assured, when actually they are fleeced.

P. 118, l. 31. *Mercer* : A dealer in silks, or woollen clothes. A silk-merchant.

P. 119, l. 1. *Wigs plastered, etc.* : In those days, wigs were generally worn.

P. 119, l. 11. *Bungees* : Some inferior kind of silk.

P. 119, l. 15. *My Lady Trail* : The mercer here hints that his shop is patronised by aristocrats.

P. 119, l. 15. *Sacque* : A woman's gown, loose at the back.

P. 119, l. 18. *What becomes a pretty lady, etc.* : A very flattering compliment to a man, who is really ugly.

P. 119, l. 20. *Short compliment* : Incidental or passing compliment.

P. 119, l. 21. *My ugly face* : Goldsmith's own face was disfigured and pitted by small-pox. It is also quite interesting to interpret the words as a good-humoured remark on the part of the Chinese Philosopher, without any reference to Goldsmith's own face. In that case, the reader will easily appreciate the sportsmanship of the Chinese Philosopher when he can call his own face ugly,—ugly, indeed, judged by the English standard.

P. 119, l. 23. *Journeyman* : A shop-assistant.

P. 119, l. 27. *Bespoke* : gave an order for ; *The fellow to this* : a piece exactly like this.

P. 119, l. 32. *Always buy before you want* : Not a very convincing maxim of conduct as regards buying ; but, it was in the interest of the merchant.

P. 119, l. 32. *You are sure, etc.* : You will surely make a good bargain.

P. 120, l. 23. *Half the goods, etc.* : How characteristic of Goldsmith all this sounds.

P. 120, l. 31. *Solicitous* : Careful.

P. 120, l. 32. *Voluntary infatuation* : My own extreme folly 'voluntary' means induced by himself.

P. 120, l. 33. *Compounded of vanity and good nature* : i.e. partly from vanity and partly from good nature. What a clear insight does Goldsmith show into his own nature ! This is indeed self-knowledge !

P. 121, l. 2. *The wisdom of the ignorant* : A very striking observation.

P. 121, l. 3. *is diffused . . . . sphere* : works in a very limited field of action.

P. 121, l. 5. *With . . . . uniformity and success* : i.e. it never fails to achieve its end.

#### LETTER XXXIV.

Goldsmith who must have been entertaining dramatic ambitions even at this time, was keenly interested in the drama and the theatre. But the state of affairs must have filled him with gloom and anger. It was not, however, his nature to burst into anger, or bitter satire, but to laugh at the folly in a mild strain. So here, under the guise of the Chinaman, he expresses his own sentiments in a sarcastic manner. The feigned anger makes these remarks all the more poignant.

At that time, there were only two licensed theatres—the Drury Lane Theatre, managed by Garrick, and the Covent Garden Theatre. As the number of theatres was limited by law, the dramatists had to depend on the managers ; and the managers, in their turn, relied rather on acting than on drama as literature. Though there was rivalry between the two theatres, it did not contribute to the better quality of plays. If one house introduced any innovation, the other tried to score off by inventing another. Goldsmith, there-

fore, playfully says that the town was fairly well divided, and could not say which house was better. For the one had what the other had not, or one excelled in certain things, the other excelled in some others.

The Chinaman says that the two theatres have opened their winter campaign, when the armies of Europe have closed their campaigns for winter. All busy preparations are made for carrying on this war between the theatres. The hostilities, he says picturesquely, have begun with two singing women, as a battle used to begin with the heralds. And wittily he goes on to contrast them. He concludes this part by saying slyly that it is, indeed, difficult to choose between the relative excellences of the two houses. "The town as yet perseveres in its neutrality. A cause of such moments, demands the most mature deliberation."

Then he goes to contradict the general opinion that people frequent the theatre in order to be instructed, as well as amused. The Chinaman is sure that no instruction whatever can be obtained from these plays. "The audience goes out with its mind filled with a funeral procession, a cat-call, a jig or a tempest."

Then he asserts that nothing is more easy than to write effectively for the English theatre; for all that a man has to do is to learn the few tricks of the trade and to adapt the play to the talents of the players. He even goes so far as to say that mere acting without words, a tragic pantomime, would really do very well and even save those expenses which go to reward the author. All the so called successful plays seem to be constructed on these principles. They are intoxicating like opium, and their eloquence serves all purposes alike, and is forgotten ever after.

P. 121, l. 9. *The mimetic troops*: Actors, here spoken of as if they form an army.

P. 121, l. 12. *Entertained with mock battles*: The words are ambiguous; it appears that mock-battle scenes shown on the stage are meant, but the mock-battles between the two theatres may also be meant. The first interpretation may be the correct one. For the key words are "upon the stage". The antithesis is between real battles and mock-battles. If the war between the theatres is to be considered, then mock-battles would be an understatement. But in the context, when the war between the theatres



is considered, the reference should be to it, and not to what is presented on the stage.

P. 121, l. 16. *With brass* : The crown of brass which glitters like gold and serves the purpose of gold on the stage.

P. 121, l. 17. *To scour up* : To clean by rubbing.

P. 121, l. 17. *Tail*—*Retinue*,—anything long and hanging : The Chinaman humorously calls the lady's train a tail. The train is a part of the dress which trails behind the wearer, as of a robe or a gown.

P. 121, l. 19. *Alexander the Great* : Perhaps not a statue, but an actor who was to stand like a statue.

P. 121, l. 22. *War, open war!* : The hostilities (i.e. rivalry) between the two theatres are keen ; war to the bitter end.

P. 121, l. 23. *Like heralds* : In mediaeval wars the heralds would first come forward and begin the contest (i.e. the battle) by defying the enemy, as, in the Battle of Hastings, Taillefer, the herald, did.

P. 121, l. 24. *Finest pipe* : Finest tune or voice.

P. 121, l. 31. *A cause of such moment* : The words are almost ironical.

P. 122, l. 18. *Cat-call* : A shrill whistle or cry ; a squeaking instrument used in theatres to express dislike of anything in a play.

P. 122, l. 18. *A jig* : A quick dance suited to a lively tune ; a clown would generally give such a jig at the end of the play.

P. 122, l. 25. *Periods* : Times.

P. 123, l. 1. *Actor's business* : Thus the whole procedure appears topsy-turvy. One would say that it is the actor's business to adapt himself to the dramatist rather than for the dramatist to adapt himself to the actor. Theoretically, the dramatist is the prime factor ; but in actual practice, he may take the talents of the actors into consideration.

P. 123, l. 9. *Whining scene* : A scene in which there is nothing but plaintive cries, loud lamentation and exhibition of sorrow.

P. 123, l. 16. *Gamut* : The whole extent ; through the whole extent, through all the varieties—from the tones of exclamation at one end to despair at the other—'Gamut' the whole series of recognised notes of the musical scale.

P. 123, l. 21. *Pantomime* : A play or entertainment consisting of a dumb show ; i.e. action without speaking.

P. 123, l. 29. *Fatigue of thinking* : An instance of biting sarcasm. In these plays, there is nothing at all that sets men thinking.

P. 124, l. 1. *Norval* is a character from *Douglas* :

“ My name is Norval ; on Grampian Hills  
My father feeds his flocks . . . ”

### LETTER XXXV

Petty follies of women, their fashions in dress, their toilet, and the like have ever been the subject of the essayists' satire. Goldsmith, too, in this essay, ridicules the fashion of long trains. Humorously he calls them the tails of the ladies and looks upon them as if they are the remnant of European barbarism. He makes fun of the train by comparing it to the bladder which we sometimes see tied to the tail of a cat, and by likening the movement of a lady with her train to the wheeling of a crocodile when facing an assailant. The essay, on the whole, is very humorous.

The introductory remarks are quite humorous. The woman is an enigma even to the learned Chinese. It is no wonder, if an English woman is a riddle to a stranger like himself.

Then he goes on to say that the fashions of women change very quickly. At one time, their clothes were bloated with whalebone (that is, they used to wear hooped petticoats). At present they have laid the hoops aside and have become as slim as mermaids (The image is striking).

What particularly distinguishes the women today is the train. The length of the train is a mark of quality or fashion. How unreasonable it appears that while the tails of the horses are cut, the tails of the ladies should grow long ! The Chinaman ironically points out how their expense in silk is beneficial to China. Though the English grow poor by this fashion, the Chinese gain in proportion. (As, however, the letters are meant for the English readers, they will realise their own folly). Then he points out how it renders the women almost helpless. They cannot walk without somebody to bear the train. Here, it is the

Man in Black, who dilates on the inconveniences and rails against the fashion.

If the English ladies laugh at the smallness of the Chinese slipper, the Chinese ladies may well laugh at the ridiculous length of an European train. Both the things are equally absurd. The Chinaman admits that English writers have ridiculed the fashion, but the best ridicule was seen in an Italian Opera. Pasquarielo was engaged to attend on the Countess of Fernambroco. But as his hands were already engaged, the one with her muff, and the other with her lap-dog, he bears her train majestically along by sticking it in the waistband of his breeches. As we contemplate this ludicrous picture, the absurdities of the fashion strike our mind very powerfully.

P. 124, l. 7. *Even in China* : This is the pose assumed in these papers, that China is at the height of civilization and that the Chinese are the most philosophical people.

P. 124, l. 9. *Riddles* : Puzzles.

P. 124, l. 13. *My picture . . . new* : For, in the very process of writing, it may be antiquated or be out of date.

P. 124, l. 22. *Train* : A part of the dress which is drawn along after something else, such as a robe or gown.

P. 124, l. 25. *The length of her tail* : The longer the tail, the higher the station of the lady in society.

P. 124, l. 29. *Bell-wether* : The leading sheep of a flock on whose neck a bell is hung. 'The bell-wether of Bantam' must be all imaginary, and that is why Goldsmith explains the exaggeration, that the tail of the sheep is so long that it is carried along in a separate wheel-barrow, because the sheep itself cannot carry it.

P. 124, l. 30. *Wheel-barrow* : a barrow supported on one wheel, and two handles and driven forward by one man.

P. 125, l. 5. *Dock* : Clip ; cut.

P. 125, l. 8. *Tends to increase the demand* : It is a settled view of Goldsmith that luxuries indirectly contribute to industry.

P. 125, l. 12. *Not bought but at some expense etc.* It does cost something ; it is expensive.

P. 125, l. 16. *Peculiar economy* : The words are ironic, for these ladies are not economical, for as a matter of fact, they spend eight or ten times the money required.



P. 125, l. 23. *As much . . . cripple* : The comparison with the Chinese woman drives the lesson home.

P. 125, l. 25. *Without a proper fortune* : The Man in Black is quite right in pointing out the absurdity of those who would ape the fashion without the means.

P. 125, l. 29. *I know a thrifty good woman* : The example is well worked out.

P. 126, l. 10. *Everyone knows* : The real danger that she may be ravished is not purposely stated.

P. 126, l. 17. *If ever she attempts to turn round* : The image though ludicrous, is highly picturesque.

P. 126, l. 26. *Inveighed against* : Railed against ; attacked with angry words.

### LETTER XXXVI.

This is one of the minor essays and naturally not many comments are needed. Goldsmith was one of the gifted hack-writers who could turn almost anything he touched into a thing of beauty. So this disquisition of his is interesting in itself. But as a serious contribution, its value to-day is not much. The view that Goldsmith wants to maintain is that, among the barbarians, arts and sciences are not required, and their sudden introduction would rather tend to unhappiness than happiness. Goldsmith shows by means of concrete illustrations that the manner of life, the laws, the sciences,—all, as they are, would in no way improve the happiness of the savage. The hunter's life is good for him. No laws of property or of contract are necessary for him. Neither has the savage the curiosity to pursue science. In short, 'ignorance is the happiness of the poor.' This proposition is illustrated by an Indian fable. A story of an elephant of Wistnow (Vishnu) is told : The elephant felt miserable even when he had the gift of man's intellect and appetite. The elephant felt the necessity of clothes, but could not get them. He also wanted the dishes that princes eat, but he could not get even one, and so he found his original state happier than the new one.

Goldsmith maintains that the sciences are not the cause of luxury, but the outcome of luxury. It is these luxuries which



are the direct spur to all advance in science. And so he maintains that the country must pass through the various stages, from barbarism to nomadic life, then to that of the shepherds and the agriculturists, and then to the life in cities and towns. As population increases, new problems arise; and these in their turn, lead to the advance of science and arts.

On the whole, these broad generalizations can be accepted, though they do not fully account for all the known facts. In man is implanted an undying curiosity, and it is this curiosity that sometimes leads to improvements, though it is equally true that necessity is the mother of invention. Science could make such splendid progress, since the days of Bacon, because it became more utilitarian in its outlook.

Goldsmith has taken a very large theme for a short essay and, therefore, the treatment is bound to be more or less cursory.

P. 127, l. 4. *Arts and sciences*: Goldsmith does not argue whether science has helped humanity more than arts. He is rather considering arts and science together as against the state of Nature. One would have felt that the problem hardly needed a discussion. Civilised life is obviously better. But, in the eighteenth century, the claims of Nature and natural state were often pressed against those of Science and arts.

P. 127, ll. 22-23. Goldsmith says that both the propositions are right in different spheres; and that is how he would reconcile the controversy.

P. 128, l. 3. *Transport the imagination*: Carry away our imagination.

P. 128, l. 10. *To prefer a hunter's life to that of cultivating the earth*: He would not like to undergo agricultural labour. Agriculture marks a higher stage of civilization than the hunter's life.

P. 128, l. 24. *Increased possessions*: Here the gain of one does not diminish the chances of the other, and so there is no necessity of checking or repressing men.

P. 129, l. 19. *Speculation is the business of fools . . . its own reward*: A bold generalization which will not be always admitted. Knowledge is its own end; and at least, in civilised communities, many would pursue knowledge, because it is its own reward. Of course, Goldsmith's view may be true in the case of barbarous

communities. But even then, there would be important exceptions to it. Human nature is the same everywhere. The knowledge, the barbarian pursues, may be different but the spirit in which he pursues it can be, and is often, disinterested.

P. 129, l. 32. *Sable* : A Siberian species of carnivorous quadruped with lustrous, dark brown or blackish fur.

P. 130, l. 1. *Render him unhappy* : That is true ; but happiness is not everything in life. Out of unhappiness even, sometimes a state of better happiness arises. That is why men hazard their present happiness.

P. 130, l. 5. *Sentiments . . . fruition* : desires which cannot be satisfied.

P. 130, l. 7. *The fables of Locman* : It is difficult to see who this writer is. Similar popular stories are quite common in Hitopadesh. 'Locman' appears to be a distortion of the name, Lakshman.

P. 130, l. 9. *Wistnow* : is Vishnu, God of the Hindus.

P. 130, l. 17. *Zendavesta of Zoroaster* : Such a detail appears highly incongruous. The Indian scholar or even the Indian God would not care for erudition of Zendavesta, the sacred text of the Parsees. To Goldsmith, perhaps, there was not much difference between Sanskrit mythology and Zendavesta, both being eastern scriptures alike.

P. 130, l. 29. *Could obtain flesh* : Could, if he liked, kill animals. There is no mistake in the remark, as it is. An elephant does not eat flesh ; but the statement made by Goldsmith relates to a hypothetical case.

P. 131, l. 10. *The great law-giver of Russia* : The lesson of the experiment is worth pondering over. If the country was not ripe for reforms, the effort was bound to fail.

P. 131, l. 18-31. In this para, Goldsmith is right in broadly referring to the successive stages of civilization.

P. 131, l. 32. *Sciences are not the cause, etc.* : Indeed, a striking observation. It is not that luxuries first gave rise to Sciences, but it is the luxuries that, directly or indirectly, have contributed to the advancement of science. However, the point is not so simple. For there is action and reaction—demand and supply. With every advance in science, new luxuries are created,

and with every new luxury, there is once more a demand for further progress in science.

### LETTER XXXVII.

The Chinese Philosopher wants to bring out the essentially ridiculous nature of the races at Newmarket. Much of the public interest in the famous horse-races is due to the fact that the aristocracy takes part in them, and that they are the fashion. Goldsmith tries to make them appear ridiculous by means of a highly interesting parody,—by describing a cart-race. Thus made ridiculous, the glamour of the horse-races would certainly appear to be tawdry, to be cheap. Many men would not consider anything great about the cart-races. Such men logically must find the horse-races also equally silly. The philosopher takes the view that horse-races do not contribute to the essential greatness of man, that there is nothing intellectual about them. Others, however, may point out that the underlying idea in the races is good, and whether it takes the form of horse-races or of cart-races, it is good in itself and tends to bring out some essential human values. Intellectual interests are not everything; and the spirit of emulation deserves occasionally to be encouraged.

Apart from the implied satire, it must be admitted that Goldsmith has parodied the races quite in a masterly style. The turnip cart, the dung cart, and the dust cart are all made vivid, and one takes a thrilling interest in reading about the progress of the race, and the turn it finally takes. Goldsmith's power as a narrator stands completely revealed here.

As a point of literary interest, it should be noted that Goldsmith first describes the great interest taken in the horse-races in such a way as to make the succeeding parody very effective.

P. 132, l. 11. *Newmarket* : a town in Suffolk, noted for horse-races.

P. 132, l. 12. *A large field* : a large meeting.

P. 132, l. 14. *Swiftest* : who runs ahead of all the others.

P. 132, l. 20. *Farriery* : The business or the art of a farrier; farrier is one who shoes horses or treats or cures their diseases.

P. 132, l. 22. In this paragraph, we are first given a casual

description of the race. It is subsequently parodied. With great art, Goldsmith first gives the reader the original which is to be parodied. Without it, the parody would have lost much of its appeal.

P. 132, l. 28. *odds* : balance of advantage.

P. 132, l. 29. *the first heat* : the first contest in running.

P. 132, l. 30. *Hollow* : A slang expression ; completely in its favour ; it is a sport jargon.

P. 132, l. 31. *Improved in wind* : ' Wind ' is staying power.

P. 133, l. 1. *knocked up* : exhausted.

P. 133, l. 2. *brought in* : reached the goal and was declared winner.

P. 133, l. 6. *Senator* : member of Parliament.

P. 133, l. 9. *stable-bred* : i.e. addicted to horse-racing.

P. 133, l. 20. *Plaustral merit* : Merit pertaining to a cart.

P. 133, l. 29. *Five to four* : That was the betting ; for every four coins, placed against one, five coins would be given. That shows the confidence of the backers.

P. 133, l. 31. *Against field* : Against all ; all the entries collectively, against which a single contestant has to compete.

P. 133, l. 32. *Brass to silver* : Farthing to a shilling ; i.e. very heavy odds.

P. 134, l. 2. *had better bottom* : had better stamina or staying-power, so that it could hold out better.

P. 134, l. 8. *Unwashed beauties of Dung* : Such a description is at once felt to be witty and appropriate.

P. 134, l. 9. *Patibulary* : Pertaining to (here resembling) a gibbet or gallows.

P. 134, l. 26. *Fortune was kind only to one* : For, after all, one alone was to win.

P. 134, l. 30. With mock simplicity, the Chinaman says that he does not know, if he has anticipated his account. The hint is plain that it is really a parody.

P. 135, l. 5. *The matches, etc.* : i.e. the horse-races are as foolish and absurd as the cart-races.

P. 135, l. 11. *asperity* : severity ; harshness.

P. 135, l. 11. *Sink man below his station* : Man is meant to be an intellectual creature, and not to waste his time in such silly contests as horse-races.



## LETTER XXXVIII.

Goldsmith shows remarkable political insight and foresight in this essay. Long before the politicians and statesmen were alive to the danger of Russia, Goldsmith seems to have seen it clearly. His analysis of the situation—the folly of the western nations, fighting among themselves and subsidising the Russians, their common enemy—has been very clearly brought out. Then he goes on to analyse the causes which have now made Russia a strong, potential enemy—her natural resources and the stage of civilization it has reached. The examples, from Nature, of locusts and ants, and finally, of hosts of barbarians are convincing enough and clinch the argument home. If there is any point where one feels like disagreeing, it is the gloomy note, the pessimistic note, at the end, that these barbarians are succeeded by still more wild and barbarous tribes. Goldsmith does not seem to take into account the civilising influences that even these barbarian tribes undergo. No generalization—pessimistic or optimistic, —can be hazarded about the course of history. We cannot say whether the barbarians of to-day are more savage than the barbarians of the past. But it seems almost a law of nature that nations prosper for a while and then decay, though nobody can lay down the natural limit either for the growth or for the decay of a nation. No one can say whether the life of a nation is only a hundred years, or a thousand years. Any generalization based upon past history has not the force of a natural law. It is only a high probability.

P. 135, l. 16. The essay has an arresting beginning.

P. 135, l. 18. *Reasons to doubt of their valour* : Obviously because they call the Russians to their aid. If they had valour, they would fight their own wars ; so this thought is expressed by Goldsmith in a later sentence (l. 20, 'cultivating such an alliance argues at once imprudence and timidity').

P. 135, l. 21. *Subsidies* : a subsidy means a sum of money paid by one state to another for assistance in war. During the Seven Years' War, then going on, the system of subsidies was very largely practised.

P. 135, l. 24. *Intestine* : Internal.

P. 135, l. 25. Goldsmith shows political insight by this observation, that Russia is the natural enemy of the European Nations.

P. 136, l. 2. *John Basilides* : Ivan, the son of Basil I, called 'Ivan the Terrible,' the founder of Russian greatness. He reigned from 1533 to 84 A.D.

P. 136, l. 8. *Learning military art* : i.e. increasing their military power and strength by means of the subsidies got from other nations.

P. 136, l. 11. *Officina Gentium* : The workshop of the world.

P. 136, l. 16. *Floodgate* : A gate for letting water flow through or to stop it.

P. 136, l. 19. *Inundation* : Flood.

P. 136, l. 26. *Sons of effeminacy and dissention* : The effeminate and disunited men.

P. 136, l. 31. *Expand the book of wisdom* : Lay open the book of wisdom.

P. 136, l. 33. *Phalanx* : A square battalion of heavy armed infantry, drawn up in ranks and files, close and deep ; hence any compact group or body.

P. 137, l. 1. *Each singly contemptible* : A single locust is almost negligible.

P. 137, l. 1. *From multitude* : From the fact that they are a huge multitude.

P. 137, l. 13. *infecting, etc.* giving rise to pestilences.

P. 138, l. 15. *When as yet savage* : Goldsmith is quite right in characterising these barbarians as men led only by instinct, just like the lower animals.

P. 137, l. 25. *More barbarous* : The climax seems to be a literary flourish. What Goldsmith says may be true with regard to only certain periods of the world's history.

## LETTER XXXIX.

The letter begins in a fine, satirical vein, describing the current practice of employing foreign teachers, the French, and the Italian etc. Hence, the Chinaman, with mock gravity says that he, too, would be patronized, if he were to open a school for women for instructing them in the conjugal arts, —to counsel wives how to retain their husbands, and to teach maids how to secure good ones. In a tone of pleasant banter, he says that he would teach them how to pretend illness or how to distinguish between the squire and his horse, or the beau and the monkey.

But there is a return on himself when he says that marriage, however, is not now fashionable, and so there are old bachelors and old maids—a very tragic sight. So he wants to argue systematically, under fifteen heads, why ladies should marry. However he would rather tell a story, an Eastern fable, pointing the same moral.

Here follows the delightful story of a queen and two princesses who were unacquainted with man. One of the princesses naturally became a prude, the other, a coquette. Once, when they had gone for fishing, they caught a pearl-diver and thought that he was a strange fish. The younger of the two sisters was about to carry him home, when the elder warned her that he was, as she had read, a strange animal, eating women and that he was dangerous, if taken internally. So they set him adrift once more. When their mother came and learnt what had happened, she told them that he was the man-fish, the most harmless and the most amusing animal. The younger sister, therefore, said that she would try to catch him once more, but to no purpose. So they were both turned—one into a shrimp, and the other into an oyster. The moral of the fable is that a woman should not miss an opportunity of getting a husband. For, once lost, it would be lost for ever.

Thus we have in this delightful letter, first, a good-humoured attack on the current fashion of employing foreigners as tutors; then the good-humoured advice, particularly to women, to get married, and finally we have the moral enforced by an Eastern fable.

Goldsmith's skill as a story-writer, his pleasant humorous touches, are seen at their best in this fable.

P. 137, l. 32. *Committed to the care of foreigners*: Though exaggerated, it was a fact that the dancing masters, music teachers, etc. were preferably foreigners. The aristocrats believed that culture consisted in these things, and so in the ladies' academy, it was fashionable to employ foreigners.

P. 138, l. 3. *As I was quite a foreigner*: There is a sly hit here; as if being a foreigner was in itself a recommendation.

P. 138, l. 5. *To instruct the ladies*: The ironic suggestion of Goldsmith has not been lost, as, today, in America such institutions are being conducted for what they are worth!

P. 138, l. 8. *Teach a wife* : The mischievous hint is that many women pretend to be sick ; they need not be taught the art.

P. 138, l. 10. *Cholic* : the proper spelling is *Colic*, severe griping pain in the belly.

P. 138, l. 11. *thorough-bred insolence of fashion* : highly offensive and contemptuous attitude of a woman of fashion.

P. 138, l. 13. *a pedant* : one who shows off his book-learning or technical knowledge for mere display. *A scholar*, a learned man ; one who is versed in literature.

P. 138, l. 14. *A prig* : a conceited fellow giving himself airs.

P. 138, l. 14. *Squire and his horse* : ridicule lies in making the squire one with his horse. A squire sometimes becomes so one with his horse that it is difficult to distinguish between the two ; so, too, it would be difficult to make out between the beau and the monkey. You could not say which of the two was imitating the other.

P. 138, l. 15. *the art of managing smiles* : how to put on deliberately smiles as occasion demands, and not smiling naturally.

P. 138, l. 20. *Marriage is at present so much out of fashion* : A Chinaman may feel so ; but it was not a fact. At the most, it could be taken up as a pose. Of course, there were many old maids.

P. 138, l. 29. *Not even Babylon in ruins* : A striking image : Babylon was a very magnificent city ; seat of the Great Babylonian Empire of ancient times. The sight of such a city lying in ruins would fill the heart of anyone with deep sadness.

P. 138, l. 31. *squib* : To go from place to place with quick steps. *Pigtail* : a plait of hair hanging down from the back of the head.

P. 138, l. 32. *The one* : i.e. the pigtail.

P. 139, l. 1. *Pomatum* : Pomade ; a preparation of fine, inodorous fat, used instead of liquid oil for hair.

P. 139, l. 2. *Electuary* : A composition of medicinal powders with honey or syrup.

P. 139, l. 6. *Prude* : A woman of affected modesty ; one who pretends extreme propriety.

P. 139, l. 9. *casuist* : Originally, one who studies questions of right and wrong ; but now generally, as here used in the sense



of a person who is given to quibbling ; one who reasons, using misleading arguments.

P. 139, l. 11. *sic argumentor* : a Latin phrase. Thus are the arguments or reasons.

P. 139, l. 12. *Spleen* : Ill-humour ; anger.

P. 139, l. 13. *Indian tale* : Goldsmith is loosely using the word 'Indian.'

P. 139, l. 14. *Amidar* : Amu Daria or the Oxus flowing through Western Turkestan. The river falls into the Aral Sea and not into the Caspian.

P. 139, l. 23. *The one of prudery...coquette* : It is very broadly hinted that a woman is by nature either a prude or a coquette.

P. 139, l. 24. *discretion* : habit of seeing things as they are, and thinking well what one is doing.

P. 139, l. 28. *Fishing* : There is an appropriateness about this amusement of the princesses. As we come to know later on, the two Princesses were, really, though unconsciously, fishing for a husband.

P. 139, l. 32. *Finny prey* : a word of 'poetic' diction, meaning 'Fish.'

P. 140, l. 3. *Sit easy on her stomach* : The foreign expression gives rise to a quaint humour ; it means 'be digested easily.'

P. 140, l. 10. *Amphibious* : Living in two elements, water and land ; the diver could as easily live in water as on land.

P. 140, l. 22. *A monstrous fish* : The details become delightful and humorous ; *monstrous* : of a very unusual shape and appearance. When a man is queer or eccentric, we call him an odd fish. Hence the peculiar appropriateness of the epithet.

P. 141, l. 4. *in such circumstances* : when pretty-looking girls are near.

P. 141, l. 6. *innocence* : used ironically. Being a coquette, she could easily perceive his amorous look.

P. 141, l. 11. *Grilladed* : Anything grilled or broiled on a grid-iron.

P. 141, l. 16. *Would the girl be poisoned?* : Note the peculiar indirect way of speaking. Such an indirect expression, though really addressed to the person, seems to gain in force by its impersonality.

P. 141, l. 19. *Pernicious* : Highly injurious or destructive ; hurtful.

P. 141, l. 21. There is an obscene hint.

P. 141, l. 30. *Black-eyed Princess* : Goldsmith cannot restrain his mischievous humour, when he explains why the princess was called black-eyed. [There is pun on the expression 'black eye.'

P. 141, l. 31. *To receive a black eye* : Black eye means discolouration around the eye due to a blow.

P. 141, l. 32. *In her liquor* : When she was drunk. As any Indian reader can see, such a description, though humorous, is absurd with reference to an Indian or an Oriental princess.

P. 142, l. 1. *One of the most . . . world* : This is a sarcastic hit at henpecked husbands. This description of man is true only of a certain class of men who make very docile husbands. Perhaps, the princess's husband belonged to this class.

P. 142, l. 6. *Three tooth-picks . . . snuff* : a very funny bet.

P. 142, l. 8. *gilding* : a misprint for *gliding*.

P. 142, l. 12. *Genius of the place* : a spirit presiding over the place.

P. 142, l. 13. *Their prude into a shrimp* : The conversion of the prude into a shrimp having hard crust appears peculiarly appropriate.

## LETTER XL.

It is always difficult to generalize about the character of a people, yet Goldsmith has succeeded quite well in this difficult task here. For he does not so much concern himself with generalizing about the nature of the people in general as with demonstrating the nature of the vulgar, and then, of the cultured classes in particular. Such a procedure seems to be more scientific. Also, he incidentally tells why foreigners misunderstand the real character, the real goodness of the English.

Goldsmith begins with a very important generalisation that soil and climate are important factors in determining the character and disposition of any nation. By way of illustration he says, that the same hidden cause which gives courage to the English dogs and cocks, gives fierceness also to Englishmen. When the vulgar English, who are unaffected by culture are studied, they 'can be

easily distinguished from all the rest of the world by superior pride, impatience and peculiar hardness of soul'. Add to it but a little culture, and you get the English gentleman ; at once elegant and majestic, affable, and yet sincere.

It appears very strange, yet it is a fact, that the English poor treat each other on every occasion with more than savage animosity and as if they were openly at war. In short, the poor do not show any kindness or mercy to the poor. The better side of the common English people is seen in the fortitude with which they bear up under the greatest calamities. Their spirit is untameable. One more trait that he notes is the tenderness of their robbers and highwaymen. Even these show some vestige of justice or pity.

The English show to the foreigner all their faults, while their good qualities can be seen only to the inquiring eye of a philosopher. Hence the Chinaman remarks that England will be the last place in the world to which he would travel by way of amusement, but the first for instruction. For in England there is much to learn for a philosopher. Outwardly the people may appear insolent and unsympathetic, but at heart they are good, courteous and kind.

P. 142, l. 24. *deleterious* : hurtful to life or health.

P. 142, l. 27. *Fez* : The illustration sets us laughing. Fez northern part of Morocco, in Africa.

P. 143, l. 2. *The polite* : the cultured classes.

P. 143, l. 3. *As in simpling* : As in discussing the properties of herbs or plants.

P. 143, l. 7. *Sons of unpolished rusticity* : Uncultured, simple rustics.

P. 143, l. 9. *impatience* : intolerant of control. *A peculiar ... soul* : endurance, intrepidity not to be found in others.

P. 143, l. 10. *are more susceptible of fine polish* : can more easily be refined.

P. 143, l. 11. *Complaisance* : Care or desire to please ; an obliging civility.

P. 143, l. 12. *Deference* : respect. *Superinduced* : brought in as an addition to.

P. 143, l. 14. *Affable* : courteous ; gracious.

P. 143, l. 21. *commiseration* : pity.

P. 143, l. 24 ff. *In China. etc.* : The example appears to be convincing.

P. 143, l. 33. *Weigh with them* : influence them.

P. 144, l. 15. The metaphor in this sentence seems to bring out very forcibly the national character, that they are at their best in difficulties, that dangers and calamities call out their surface fortitude and daring.

P. 144, l. 19. *Miscreants* : Criminals ; detestable scoundrels.

P. 144, l. 27. *The highwaymen etc.* : A well-known characteristic, reminding one of Robin Hood, Macheath and other highwaymen.

P. 145, l. 10. The letter concludes with a very high compliment indeed paid to English character.

## LETTER XLI

The device of the diary is ingenious and breaks the monotony of the letters. The skill with which the details are filled shows Goldsmith's excellence as an artist, and his dramatic genius. In this letter the Chinaman ridicules the pretensions of astronomers. He shows how their own calculations lead them to imagine calamities which are never to befall humanity but which only serve to make them miserable.

The Chinaman begins with a generalisation that the mind is always ingenious in making its own distress. As a man rises in the social scale from a beggar to a rich man, his miseries do not become less, but, like the horizon, grow at every step he ascends. Of all the imaginary miseries, the misery of a pessimistic philosopher is the most ridiculous. Philosophy was introduced to make man happy. But in the case of the pessimist it serves to make him miserable as his philosophy only leads him to imagine unforeseen and hypothetical miseries. The diary of a philosopher—really, an astronomer—, for a week, shows how his own philosophy makes him so miserable.

On Monday, he was afraid that the universe was getting old and the planetary system might go out of order. On Tuesday, though he realised that the planetary irregularity might be far off, yet he began to be anxious about the change in climate that



would come about because of the obliquity of the equator and of its gradual shifting. As he calculated, in England there would be freezing cold in about a million years hence, and that was why he was miserable, at the thought of his grand-children and their hard lot ! On Wednesday, he expected a comet and could not imagine what calamity it would bring. On Thursday, he was uneasy because his calculation was wrong, and yet he was upset ; for if the comet were to come on that night, it would cause great havoc on the earth. The next day, they saw not less than sixteen comets, and yet they could not determine which was the one they had expected. They seemed to agree about one without a tail ; (a comet is not a comet, if it has no tail). Lastly, he was worried about the moon and was more concerned about the moon than about his daughter and her elopment !

P. 145, l. 16. *Ingenious* : Clever in inventing.

P. 145, l. 22. *His prospects widen* : His hopes and desires increase more and more.

P. 145, l. 30. *Philosophic misery* : mental suffering brought on by philosophical speculations.

P. 146, l. 4. *He shall grieve etc.* : Such an observation shows the ridiculousness of the speculative philosopher. He is concerned not with the miseries here, but the miseries of the inhabitants of the moon !

P. 146, l. 7. *One should imagine* : Thus the true purpose of philosophy is distorted.

P. 146, l. 11. *Desponding sort* : those who always believed that something disastrous would happen ; those who are pessimistic in outlook.

P. 146, l. 22. *The system is growing old* : Neither Goldsmith, nor anybody would deny the truth of the statement, but the pessimistic conclusions and the immediate worries are the things which appear ridiculous.

P. 146, l. 32. *This dreadful change is begun* : That is why the astronomer was filled with dread, and seemed to suffer from imaginary calamities.

P. 146, l. 33. *Yet idiot man laughs* : We know who the idiot is !

P. 147, l. 10. *The ecliptic* : the path in which the sun seems to move round the earth and in which eclipses occur.

P. 147, l. 11. *Piteas* : An imaginary name, invented by Goldsmith for the purpose of this letter.

P. 147, l. 14. *Louville* : Perhaps another imaginary astronomer.

P. 147, l. 17. *The Antarctic pole* : i.e. the South pole.

P. 147, l. 22. *Nova Zembla* : Two Russian Islands in the Arctic Ocean.

P. 147, l. 25. *impending over* : just about to befall.

P. 147, l. 26. *Visitation* : divine dispensation of punishment.

P. 148, l. 13. *Our whole society* : The society of astronomers.

P. 148, l. 17. *Virgo* : the sixth sign of the Zodiac.

P. 148, l. 19. *Appulses* : The approach of a planet to a conjunction with the sun or a star.

P. 148, l. 20. *Librations* : Libration is an apparent irregularity in the moon's motion, whereby its globe seems to turn slightly round to each side alternately.

P. 148, l. 21. *Grenadier* : Originally, a soldier who threw grenades (explosives), now used as the title of the first regiment of foot-guards.

P. 148, l. 23. *Expletive* : A word or syllable inserted for ornament, or to fill up a vacancy. Here the word is used in a metaphorical sense :—'a useless creature.'

P. 148, l. 26. *Constant only to me* : True to the theory as I alone have found out. The moon may appear irregular to others, but he had discovered the law according to which the moon would appear constant, i.e. governed by the law. He, however, finds, to his grief and disappointment, that the moon is not governed by the law, and therefore, not constant to him.

## LETTER XLII.

In this essay, we see, as usual, Goldsmith's originality and independence of thought. Whereas many would have maintained that wit is natural, Goldsmith shows that it is, in some measure, mechanical. And so, his correct conclusion, that it is long practice that brings justness of thinking and mastery of manner. Such an opinion coming from Goldsmith, who seems to write spontaneously, has great value, and would show what he himself considered to be the secret of his success as a writer.

His complaint against titled men of letters reflects a temporary phase in literary history. Goldsmith has ridiculed properly the

snobbishness of the public, and he is also right in pointing out how necessity or hunger is a spur to genius and that is why good writers should be rare among the aristocrats and among the amateurs.

There are always important exceptions to such generalisations. The wind of genius blows where it listeth, and it is not mere hunger or necessity that would bring out genius. Poverty is both a curse and a spur to genius.

The remarks of Goldsmith even on literary reputation are worth considering. A reputation, which is due to a passing fashion of the day, will be short-lived while that which is hardly won is hardly lost."

P. 148, l. 31. *It is surprising etc.* : The philosopher may well complain that a title should have such an influence on mind. But the fact is plain, that, it is merely a symbol.

P. 149, l. 2. *Plastic wonder* : [Plastic is a transferred epithet] wonder at the plastic art, namely a toy or a puppet.

P. 149, l. 5. The parody of the 'Rat-catcher-in-ordinary to His Majesty' is very effective.

P. 149, l. 9. *They who make books* : Writers of books ; authors.

P. 149, l. 12. *Chams* : 'Khans' autocrats.

P. 149, l. 13. *If the titles inform me right* : If the titles are true, if we are to go by the titles, then, it is plain that even kings courtiers, and emperors contribute to the press. The suggestion is plain that they are authors only in name ; and that somebody must have written for them, or that these are assumed titles.

P. 149, l. 17. *might as well send etc.* : might be burnt.

P. 149, l. 20. *Caitiff* : A mean, despicable fellow.

P. 149, l. 23. *Would combine to worry him* : Professional jealousy is thus explained to some extent.

P. 149, l. 29 *Their Drydens, etc.* : These are the names used as types :

DRYDEN (1631-1700), was a well-known man of letters, a poet, critic and dramatist, and served the king by his political satires.

BUTLER (1612-80) : the author of *Hudibras*, starved, while his portrait was hung in the king's bed-chamber, as a mark of honour.

OTWAY (1651-85) : a dramatist.

FARQUHAR (1678-1760) : one of the great Restoration comedy-writers.

Dryden and the rest were certainly "writers for bread," but they lived in the midst of circumstances, differing in a measure from those of the age of Goldsmith. There was, in the seventeenth century, no public to appeal to. The author by profession was the client of a noble patron, and at best published by subscription only.

Goldsmith felt a secret satisfaction in the fact that genius had so often proved "the offspring of necessity"; and he found comfort in his own distress, by the reflection that he was only "starving in those streets where Butler and Otway starved before him;" "the poets of the west," he says, "are as remarkable for this indigence as their genius."

P. 150, l. 8. *I would apply to* : The analogies of the hatter and the tailor are thus generalised. One should go to a professional author for a book.

P. 150, l. 9-10. *Wit* : Skill or cleverness in devising or making things.

P. 150, l. 11. *mechanical* : working like a machine once set in action. *catch at* : try to acquire something like it, i.e. a semblance of aptitude.

P. 150, l. 13. *the substance* : i.e. real skill.

P. 150, l. 14. *justice of thinking* : justness of thinking, i.e. right thinking.

P. 150, l. 15. *Holiday-writers* : Amateurs, writing only on some days, when they are free from their professions. There is also a veiled suggestion that they would not be taking the necessary care and exertions as they are in a holiday mood.

P. 150, l. 18. *An excellence... sharpened by necessity* : This sentence brings together the two strands of the essay.

P. 150, l. 20. *many literary, etc.* : many literary writers who won fame by pandering to the tastes of their time, have soon been forgotten after their death.

P. 150, l. 26. *That which is hardly earned is hardly lost* : That which is won *with great effort*—hard won—is *not easily* lost. There is a pun on the word 'hardly'; the remark has the neatness of an epigram. The correct expression is 'hard won', 'hardly' being used in the sense of 'scarcely' in modern English.



## LETTER XLIII.

In this letter, Hingpo tells the story of his separation from Zelis and how he despairs of ever meeting her, as she has been carried off by the peasants up the country on the banks of the Wolga. Now that he has lost her, his whole future is gloomy and he would confess that he really loved her. Somehow, we are not much interested by the pathos of the situation. And one of the critics says that it is rather due to the 'correct' classical style that pathos could not be secured. It is difficult to subscribe to such an opinion, however satisfactory it may appear on the surface.

P. 150, l. 30. *Must I still be doomed* : We have had enough of pathos ; and to harp on the same string becomes monotonous.

P. 151, l. 13. *Pirates* : Men or ships who attempt to capture and rob ships at sea ; a sea-robber.

P. 151, l. 21. *Insensible to* : not moved by show.

P. 151, l. 22. *Give quarter to* : To show mercy to ; spare the lives of.

P. 151, l. 23. *The severity of the laws etc.* : Goldsmith's remark is right and shows his insight.

P. 151, l. 26. *Subtility* : Cunning ; shrewdness.

P. 151, l. 33. *Confluence into* : lit. falling into and joining ; i.e. the place where it joined the Wolga.

P. 152, l. 1. *This river* : The Bulija, referred to in line 9 on the previous page.

P. 152, l. 2. *Barque* : A small boat ; a barge.

P. 152, l. 3. *Signal of death* : i.e., a black flag.

P. 152, l. 5. *Glass* : of course, telescope in its crude form.

P. 152, l. 16. *sensible of* : knowing.

P. 152, l. 31. *Not sensible* : We were not conscious i.e. did not know ; we were ignorant of the wreck of the barque.

P. 153, l. 8. *I will confess, I love her* : Though Hingpo confesses it to his father now, we know it right from the start.

## LETTER XLIV.

The administration of law has ever come in for a lot of satire. In this letter the Chinese philosopher takes up a few points for comments. The first is that the case,

in which his friend, the Man in Black is engaged, has been pending for a very long time. It is quite in keeping with the character of the Man in Black that he should be hopefully led on from year to year. Secondly, the case-law is adversely criticised. There is, as every lawyer knows, sufficient justification for the English system of case law or citing of precedents. Yet a stranger, ignorant of the intricacies of the system, may well doubt its wisdom. Goldsmith has really urged the strongest point that could be urged against the system. "If arguing from authorities be exploded from every other branch of learning, why should it be particularly adhered to in this? . . . and such a system will lead to the growth of formalities, to learning the arts of litigation rather than the discovery of right.' The justification of the system is that the same good sense prevails from age to age and the English judges maintain that, in deciding cases, they are guided by the principles underlying the precedent; in other words, the cases are cited not for the details, but for the principles underlying them.

The Man in Black, as usual, argues in a wrong-headed way. He maintains that the delay in the administration of law contributes to the security of property. The Chinese Philosopher (that is, Goldsmith,) wisely remarks that two evils are to be avoided viz :—the multiplicity of laws on the one hand and overconfidence in the judges on the other. If there are too many laws, they defeat their own purpose. On the other hand, if there are no laws, and if everything is left to the judges, then too the ends of justice are defeated.

The Philosopher is surprised to find so many persons engaged in the administration of law—the bailiff, the solicitor, the lawyer, the judge. But the Man in Black assures him that they all live by watching each other. But the Chinese philosopher interrupts him, saying that it is the poor client who pays all these persons for this watching. To illustrate his shrewd remark, he tells a Chinese fable entitled 'Five Animals at a Meal'. Scarcely does he conclude the tale when the lawyer comes to inform his friend that the case is postponed, and assures him that next time it would surely be finished, and that he should pay fresh fees as a retainer. The ever-credulous Man in Black consents to do so.

There is perhaps a sly sarcasm in the statement at the opening

of the letter that the Man in Black and the Chinese were to go to visit Bedlam—the lunatic asylum. If we suspect that there is any satire, we may interpret by saying that the scene in the law court was as good as one in a lunatic asylum. I, however, do not think so.

P. 153, l. 14. *To visit Bedlam* : To visit the lunatic asylum. In the eighteenth century, the Hospital of St. Mary of *Bethlehem* near London was used as a lunatic asylum. As one would go to see the Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's so it was fashionable then to go to see Bedlam.

P. 153, l. 20. *Depending* : Pending ; going on ; not yet decided.

P. 153, l. 23. *Rat-traps* : We are surprised to read that the law-courts in Goldsmith's China were not ideal, but were worse than those of England.

P. 153, l. 25. *And more cunning* : Require more cunning.

P. 153, l. 28. *I was assured of success* : That is the usual trick of the lawyers. They would always assure their client of success ; for without it, the client may not go to law or would go to another lawyer who would assure him of success.

P. 154, l. 1. *Upon the eve* : quite near. 'Eve', the time just preceding a great event.

P. 154, l. 2. *Term* : A legal phrase—the period for which the courts of law are open, or are working.

P. 154, l. 5. *Demur* : Objection ; hesitation.

P. 154, l. 12. *Salkeld and Ventris* : The reports edited by Salkeld and Ventris.

P. 154, l. 21. *Coke and Hales* : These again are other well-known authorities on law ; it may be stated in passing, that Goldsmith's description is not very accurate.

P. 154, l. 22. *carry his cause* : win his case.

P. 154, l. 25. *Determined* : made them decide ; enabled them to come to a conclusion.

P. 154, l. 28. *Let me even add, etc.* : A characteristic opinion of Goldsmith.

P. 154, l. 31. *exploded* : rejected as useless.

P. 154, l. 33. *embarrass* : hinder the free course of,

P. 155, l. 3. *Arts* : Forms and formalities.

P. 155, l. 6. *The more time that is taken up etc.*: The argument of the Man in Black is silly. But Goldsmith purposely puts such silly remarks in the mouth of the Man in Black, in order to hold up to ridicule 'law's dull delay.'

P. 155, l. 10. *Deliberate*: with full and careful consideration.

P. 155, l. 11. *Secure our property*: Note the pun on the word; *Secure*, which has two meanings; (1) to keep or make safe; (2) to succeed in getting for oneself. The administration of justice, the lawyers, the formalities and so many families *secure* the property of the litigants, i.e., the property is, in the end, really swallowed up by all these. There is unconscious *irony* in the expression as used by the Man in Black.

P. 155, l. 25. *Half this multitude*: The Chinaman would be surprised even if there were work enough to employ even half the number. To him it appears impossible that such a large number could find employment here.

P. 155, l. 28. *Catchpole*: Bailiff.

P. 155, l. 28. *An attorney*: one who conducts proceedings in the courts of common-law: a solicitor, in the Court of Chancery. Hence it is clear that the chain (or series) of checks as described by Goldsmith is not true to fact.

P. 156, l. 1. *Five animals at a meal*: The story is humorous and drives the point home.

P. 156, l. 9. *All were intent on their prey, etc.*: Each was intent on its prey. This is the real point of the story.

P. 156, l. 13. *Sousing*: Rushing down.

P. 156, l. 13. *Gobbled*: Swallowed.

P. 156, l. 17. *Retain*: to secure services of a lawyer or barrister by engagement and preliminary payment called 'retainer.'

P. 156, l. 21. *See Bedlam*: after having seen one Bedlam, they would be going to see another!

## LETTER XLV.

In this letter, we learn that Hingpo, the Chinaman's son, is coming to Amsterdam and then to London. The Chinaman, in spite of the fact that he likes London, is but naturally anxious to go to his native land. He now makes up his mind to travel in future in the company of his son.



Here we have one of the early hints that the series of letters is more or less coming to an end.

Even in such a minor essay, we meet with some striking remarks, which show Goldsmith's shrewd and subtle observation, as for instance, the remark "a city like this is soil for great virtues and great vices."

P. 156, l. 29. *Cover under the appearance of fortitude* : The remark makes it clear that the Chinese Philosopher himself had seen through his son.

P. 156, l. 30. *I have offered*, etc. : I did not try to console him, because consolation, often increases sorrow. Nothing but time and change of circumstances blunt the edge of grief. (Cf. Vicar of Wakefield—'Premature consolation is but the remembrancer of sorrow').

P. 157, l. 21. *Collateral* : side by side ; indirect.

P. 157, l. 26. *Art supplies the place of Nature* : Effort, ingenuity, and skill make up for natural deficiencies.

## LETTER XLVI.

The Coronation of George III was soon to take place and here was a topic for the Chinaman's disquisition, at once naïve and subtle. In order to give a mock-serious description of the ceremonial part, Goldsmith was right in bringing in Beau Tibbs. It was not at all his object to give a serious, detailed and accurate description of the ceremony. At the end of the essay, he shows that he is conscious of it, and properly warns the reader not to expect it from him. The one thing that was likely to call forth protest from any grave person was that there was not that austerity, that sense of awe, which should properly attend such a ceremony. On the other hand, the continuation of the feudal ceremony—that of the Champion of England throwing down his glove as a challenge—would excite nothing but laughter. We should remember that the office of the Champion of England was hereditary and so the champion may sometimes be an old, decrepit man who could hardly ride his horse. Hence one could not help observing that if any man seriously challenged him, it would be a great fun. Of course, there was no such possibility, because the Law would at once take hold of such a man and hang him

as a traitor. But the people could not help laughing at such a relic of the past. Goldsmith very properly singles out this detail for comment.

Goldsmith is quite right when he points out that in religion as well as in politics, ceremony has its value. An emperor in night-cap will not excite even a fraction of the respect he gets when wearing his crown. Hence such ceremonies have their justification. It is not merely one man putting on the cap of another—one king putting on the crown of another,—but it is a grave occasion, and all magnificence must be calculated to enhance its importance.

The comical side of the occasion—the exorbitant price demanded for a seat, and the ridiculous eagerness of the ladies to witness the ceremony—are set forth unforgettably. Equally unforgettable is the comment of Beau Tibbs that if it is merely a question of his saying that he was present on the occasion, he is determined to say it, and he cannot see the necessity of paying for it.

Though, on the whole, the character of Beau Tibbs is not here as striking as in the three other essays, the last remark is quite in keeping with his character. His acquaintance with the aristocracy is all imaginary and yet he is always brazen-faced to talk glibly of it. And so he can describe the coronation as if he has seen it with his own eyes. He is too poor to afford a seat, but he is not going to deny himself the pleasure of saying that he has seen the coronation ceremony.

P. 158, l. 24. *Young King's coronation* : This letter was published on February 10, 1761, though the actual coronation took place on September 22, 1761.

P. 158, l. 28. *laying in* : providing herself with an ample stock of.

P. 158, l. 29. *Which the mercer tells* : The hint is that she receives the opinion from the mercer who is interested in selling his goods, and who may thus very easily impose on her.

P. 158, l. 31. *Had her ears bored* : in order that she may wear ear-rings.

P. 159, l. 2. *Shoved up* : Moved up, as if by pushing.

P. 159, l. 4. *My betters* : My superiors ; better than myself in social status. In fact she did so, because they paid her far more than the Chinaman.

P. 159, l. 9. *This seemed peculiarly adapted, etc.* : The sly dig is that Beau Tibbs cannot understand anything subtle, but would understand only the fopperies, the fashions, and the glittering show. The topic exactly suited his talents. He was at home in it.

P. 159, l. 10. *Size and turn of his understanding* : i.e. low, vulgar mind.

P. 159, l. 11. *Blazoned over* : ' painted or inscribed over with, as on a coat of arms, (Literally, ' blazon ' is to make public or inscribe a coat of arms or ' a banner in colours or ornamentally ).

P. 159, l. 11. *Coronet* : A small crown, inferior to the sovereign's, worn by nobility.

P. 159, l. 12. *Escutcheons* : Shields on which armorial or heraldic bearings are represented.

P. 159, l. 12. *Tassels* : a hanging tuft, of threads, or cords of silk or other material as ornament for caps etc.

P. 159, l. 13. *Garter* : Garter King-of-Arms ; the chief herald of the order of the Garter. The order of the Garter is the highest order of knighthood in Great Britain.

P. 159, l. 13. *Rouge Dragon* : One of the four pursuivants (officers below the Herald) of the Herald's College.

P. 159, l. 15. *Clarencieux* : The second King-of-Arms in England, so named from the Duke of Clarence, the son of Edward III.

P. 159, l. 15. *Blue Mantle* : One of the four pursuivants of the Herald's College.

P. 159, l. 16. *Alderman* : Magistrate, next in dignity to the Mayor.

P. 159, l. 17. *Champion of England* : " Champion of the King." His office, at the coronation of kings, when the King is at dinner, is to ride armed into Westminster Hall, and to make a challenge by a herald, that if any person should deny the King's title to the Crown, he is there ready to defend it ; which done, the King drinks to him, and sends him as a gift a cup (filled with wine) with a cover, which he has for his fee.

P. 159, l. 18. *No way terrified* : As if he expected the champion to be afraid of such a large gathering !

P. 159, l. 24. *All his passes* : Passes, thrusts, in fencing.

P. 159, l. 24. *With a witness*, means 'to a great degree.'

P. 159, l. 31. *Inured to arms* : Accustomed to wield arms ; the words are to be taken in an ironical sense.

P. 159, l. 32. *Prancing away* : proudly moving away, on his prancing horse.

P. 159, l. 33. *Dram cup* : Wine cup.

P. 160, l. 1. *wrapping etc.* : making the subject still more difficult to understand.

P. 160, l. 9. *Images* : representations.

P. 160, l. 16. *Albert Durer* : A famous German painter.

P. 160, l. 32. *Nosegays* : Bunches of fragrant flowers.

P. 161, l. 1. *Frenched hair* : Hair dressed in the manner of French ladies.

P. 161, l. 4. *Largess* : a present or donation. The herald cried for largess from men of rank and dignity.

P. 161, l. 5. *Gentlemen Usher* : An officer whose business it is to introduce strangers or to walk before a person of rank.

P. 161, l. 10. *Fopperies* : Vanities in dress or affectation.

P. 161, l. 12. *Pageant*, etc. : Goldsmith is not accurate in his quotation. The actual sentence is : " But yet, since princes will have such things, it is better they should be graced with elegance than daubed with cost."

P. 161, l. 15. *Tire-women* : Women employed to dress ladies.

P. 161, l. 16. *Mechanically* : By means of external things, as by means of instruments, i.e. without influencing the heart.

P. 161, l. 20. *Either* : Both religion and politics.

P. 161, l. 24. *Edict* : a decree, an order proclaimed by authority.

P. 161, l. 25. *Sumptuary law* : Law meant to check or limit extravagance in banquets, dress etc. in the interest of the state. 'Sumptuary' means pertaining to or regulating expense.

P. 162, l. 6. *Follies, often repeated, etc.* : A shrewd observation. Assume etc. appear quite reasonable or sensible.

P. 162, l. 10. *Bespeak* : engage beforehand.

P. 162, l. 26. *Gules* : One of four pursuivants of the Herald's College.

P. 161, l. 32. *Whangti* : An imaginary Chinese emperor. The reference is, of course, purely burlesque.



## LETTER XLVII.

In this letter Goldsmith describes a humorous episode, and says that it is typical of the way in which people in England treat reports and come to believe them. The English first steadily believe in a report, more particularly, if it is prophetic of ruin or disaster. It is after worrying themselves much about it, that they come to consider, at a late stage, whether it was at all probable, and then only they come to the conclusion that it was a false report and that they were wrong in believing it. Yet they learn nothing from this experience. For no sooner have they done with this folly, than they prepare for another. New reports are ever framed, and ever do the people believe them.

This unreasoning credulity is not confined to individuals. Reports, often idle and exaggerated, are believed by the public and lead them to behave like fools, until at last it is discovered, that these reports are nothing but unfounded rumours. 'New circumstances produce new changes, but the people never change, they are persevering in folly.'

P. 163, l. 2. *Conjuncture* : Crisis, combination of circumstances fraught with danger.

P. 163, l. 9. *To denounce* : Here it means 'to threaten.'

P. 163, l. 10. *Denunciation* : i.e. rumour of some impending calamity.

P. 163, l. 11. *Fling* : rush or go about angrily, or in excitement. *Propagate*, Spread abroad.

P. 163, l. 15. *syllogism* : logical reasoning.

P. 163, l. 21. *Disengaged* : Free.

P. 163, l. 26. *Credulity* : Disposition to believe on insufficient evidence, credulousness.

P. 163, l. 29. *Are to be eaten up etc.* : implicitly believe that the French are going to invade England, bringing their armies in flat-bottomed boats.

P. 163, l. 33. *Jump down . . . . luxury* : are to be ruined by extravagance due to indulgence in luxuries.

P. 164, l. 1. *Herring subscription* : Enormous subscription ; subscription in large shoals. The peculiarity of the herring fish is that it is found in large shoals. The herring is a common small sea-fish of great commercial value, found moving in great shoals or multitudes.

P. 164, l. 3. *New circumstances etc.* : Circumstances may change, but the people never grow wise by experience, they continue to be as foolishly credulous as before.

P. 164, l. 5. *boding politicians* : i.e. persons indulging in imaginary fears of calamities to befall the nation.

P. 164, l. 6. *Splenetic* : Suffering from spleen, i.e., 'in bad temper' ; gloomy.

P. 164, l. 8. *Spleen* : Ill-humour ; melancholy.

P. 164, l. 14. *Common-wealth* : body politic : the whole body of the people.

P. 164, l. 15. *Decadence* : decline or deterioration.

P. 164, l. 16. *The constitution* : the laws or fundamental principles according to which the state is governed.

P. 164, l. 19. *Sanguine* : carried away by false fears. Here the word is not used in its usual sense of 'hopeful'.

P. 164, l. 24. *Incendiary* : Lit. one that sets fire to a building ; here the word metaphorically means, 'a person who maliciously stirs up strife or trouble.

P. 165, l. 10. *Mastiff* : A thick-set and powerful variety of dog, much used as a watch-dog.

P. 165, l. 11. Note the circumstantial exactness in "three hours four minutes," meant to impress by its pose of accuracy.

P. 165, l. 16. *Consternation* : Dismay ; terror throwing into confusion.

P. 165, l. 19. *Inveterate* : Deep rooted : confirmed.

P. 165, l. 20. *Convened* : Called together.

P. 165, l. 32. *The dog would not eat the letter* : So a clear proof was given that the threats in the letter may also be futile or equally ineffective. If this experiment had been tried first, instead of at last, they would have been saved all the worry. The power claimed to poison slowly but surely would have been found to be purely imaginary, without any basis.

### LETTER XLVIII.

Here is a powerful essay which deserves to be studied closely. We, Indians, have no particular sympathy for or antipathy to the Methodists, and therefore, enjoy the essay in a detached spirit, without prejudice. We, therefore, feel how wise the remarks of Goldsmith in themselves are. It does not matter much to us

that they distort, to some extent, the real Methodist. Goldsmith is quite right when he points out that ridicule is the only effective weapon against fanaticism. Persecution only strengthens a new religion whereas ridicule exposes it and checks it effectively.

Goldsmith has no sympathy for the Methodists. He, therefore, tries to ridicule their gravity, their melancholy, their gloom, and their sour aspect. He concludes the essay with a humorous anecdote, and shows how laughter alone saved the situation.

P. 166, l. 3. *Religious sects etc.* : The Chinaman generalises. There were many minor sects of Christianity. Methodism was started by John Wesley. It was a new sect, when this letter came to be written. "Methodism", said Horace Walpole, in 1749, "is more fashionable than anything but brag ; the women play very deep at both."

P. 166, l. 4. *Conventicle* : ' A religious meeting, (for worship) not allowed by law and hence held secretly. A place of such a meeting. Goldsmith thus ridicules by showing how easy it is to start a new sect. For nothing more is required except a place for secret meetings.

P. 166, l. 6. *The sellers . . . . extreme good bargains* : Because they promise salvation to the members of that sect.

P. 166, l. 8. *Confidence* : assured expectation of salvation.

P. 166, l. 10. *Fond of going to Paradise* : A very striking observation.

P. 166, l. 19. *They have actually formed a new sect* : So Goldsmith cannot at all find any difference of opinion, any fundamental disagreement between the Established Church and the new sect of Methodism. However, we should note that the new opinion was a final abandonment of faith in "the uninterrupted succession," and the rule of the Bishop.

P. 166, l. 21. *They hate each other, etc.* : How biting is the ridicule !

P. 166, l. 27. *Use little music, etc* : Use no music, but they carry on their prayers to the accompaniment of sighs and groans.

P. 166, l. 30. *The Lamentations* : The Lamentations of Jeremiah ' one of the books in *The Old Testament*. From the Lamentations, i.e., using the phraseology of the *Lamentations*.

P. 167, l. 5. *A sect of Enthusiasts* : An enthusiast is one inspired by enthusiasm or passionate zeal ; a self-deluded person.

P. 167, l. 7. *Talapoins* : Buddhist monks properly of Pegu (in Burma), but here it applied generally to all Buddhist monks.

P. 167, l. 10. *Enthusiasms in every country*, etc. : A very subtle and wise observation.

P. 167, l. 13. *Contrition* : through penitence, through a sense of sin.

P. 167, l. 14. *The worshipper... gloomy* : A very true observation.

P. 167, l. 17. *The enthusiast's being an enemy to laughter* : The reason may not be convincing, yet the fact remains that the fanatics are devoid of the sense of humour. They are too serious.

P. 167, l. 23. *Zoroaster* : was the founder of the Parsee religion ; and not a leader of the Brahmins. Goldsmith here commits a very sad error.

P. 168, l. 5. *Persecution only serves*, etc. : A very wise observation. These new religions acquire fresh vigour when they are persecuted by having its members executed.

P. 168, l. 7. *Vivacious* : tenacious of life.

P. 168, l. 8. *Dissection* : cutting up (an animal or plant) to show its structure, etc.

P. 168, l. 10. *Eludes the pressure* : escapes adroitly from the arguments of the antagonist.

P. 168, l. 10. *Distinctions* : points of difference.

P. 168, l. 12. *Fix by argument* : to place him in such a position that he must yield to the force of argument.

P. 168, l. 15. *The stake* : 'stake', literally, the long stick with a sharp point at one end, on which a person was impaled or transfixed, as a form of capital punishment. *Stake* also means the post to which a martyr was tied to be burnt to death.

P. 168, l. 15. *The faggot* : lit. the bundle of sticks used for fuel. Here it means 'punishment of being burnt to death.'

P. 168, l. 15. *Disputing doctor* : The learned man who opposes by argument.

P. 168, l. 17. *harmless* : not able to inflict any harm, i.e. 'ineffective, futile.'

P. 168, l. 17. *Innovating pride* : Pride which innovates ; that means, those who are proud of introducing a new sect or religion.

P. 168, l. 19. *Vulnerable* : that can be wounded.



P. 168, l. 25. *Philip the Second* : the famous King of Spain, whom Mary I of England married in 1554. During the latter half of the 16th century, Philip was engaged in ceaseless efforts to spread Catholic religion in Europe. He sent the Spanish Armada against England in 1588.

P. 168, l. 28. *Legend* : Legendary scripture in which they believed.

P. 168, l. 29. *Authentic* : genuine ; about the truth of which there was no doubt.

P. 168, l. 33. *Fiery trial* : Trial by fire.

P. 169, l. 3. *Whenever people flock* : A shrewd observation.

P. 169, l. 3. *An hundred to one* : Almost certainly, the chances being hundred to one, that is, one per cent.

P. 169, l. 9. *Both legends were consumed* : the surprise end comes like a bathos.

P. 169, l. 11. *The people now etc.* : The people realised that the pretensions of both the sects were unfounded. They realised their own mistake of attaching themselves to one sect or the other.

## LETTER XLIX.

In this letter, the Chinese philosopher describes an Election to Parliament, and gives his impressions of all that he witnessed. One editor—Mr. Gibbs—suggested that the contest here described on April 3, 1761, was that of Southwark, which had a large brewing interest. He further suggests that the recent war-tax on strong beer indirectly furnished a pretext for the brewers' outcry against "foreign drams". It would be also interesting to read a part of the letter of Horace Walpole who was at Lynn with his constituents, "addressing them in the Town Hall, riding at the head of the two thousand people, dining with above two hundred of them, amid bumpers, huzzas, songs, and tobacco, and finishing with country dancing at a ball and sixpenny whisk." This must have been very much the experience of the Southwark candidates—Joseph Mawby and Alexander Hume—if, indeed, the election described is that of Southwark.

If we read this letter with these details in our mind, we shall find it humorous and interesting. The elections to Parliament

have always been a rowdy affair and have called forth many humorous descriptions. The Chinese Philosopher, with his usual pose, comments on some of the aspects. More particularly on the dinners, on the drinks, on the treats that are so liberally given to the voters. As regards the point at issue in the election, it does not seem much to influence the voters. Many of them are dead drunk and hardly know what they do.

P. 169, l. 16. *celebrating a feast* : The Chinese Philosopher calls the Septennial election " a feast ". This strange name hints at the fanciful and whimsical point of view which we are to expect from the Chinaman. The election does not strike him as a political event, but merely as a scene of wild merry-making.

P. 169, l. 18. *Being then dissolved* : The dissolution had taken place on March 20, 1761. This letter appeared in the 'Public Ledger' on 3rd April, 1761.

P. 169, l. 20. *Feast of lanterns* : On the evening of the fifteenth day of the eighth month of their year, the Chinese celebrate the festival of the Moon. (Compare the Indian custom also.) This moon festival is known as the Feast of Lanterns. This detail of local colour is correct.

P. 169, l. 28. *Eating seems to make a grand ingredient* : A gentle raillery of the English dinners.

P. 170, l. 8. *Treats* : Entertainments, as with food or drink.

P. 170, l. 8. *Constituents* : voters. The people of a certain district who have the right to vote for a member of Parliament are called *constituents*.

P. 170, l. 12. *It is extremely natural* : A correct and humorous observation.

P. 170, l. 20. *Culverin* : A cannon of great length ; generally an eight-pounder.

P. 170, l. 22. *Man-milliner* : A milliner is one who makes head-dresses, bonnets and other female apparel. Generally persons in this trade, like the tailors, are considered to be imperfectly manly. For instance, it is generally said that nine tailors make a man. So we can understand what the effect of the election-dinner can be, when a man-milliner turns out bloody.

P. 170, l. 26. *No man here, etc.* : The grave tone in which the statement is made reveals clearly the underlying irony ; as if, these could be sufficient reasons.

P. 171, l. 1. *Fight themselves sober* : Fight 'till they are sober.

P. 171, l. 2. *charge* (themselves) : i.e., prepare themselves fully.

P. 171, ll. 4-5. *Since while they are subduing, etc.* : The obvious meaning is that there is fighting among themselves at home, and there is fighting with the enemy abroad. So Englishmen may now be properly said to be at war, for they are now everywhere at war.

P. 171, l. 7. *To a neighbouring village* : Southwark may be the village.

P. 171, l. 11. *Reinforcements* : Additional men and things, to strengthen.

P. 171, l. 12. *With a very good face* : quite confidently or boldly.

P. 171, l. 13. *handling their arms* : playing upon their fiddles.

P. 171, l. 14. *Manoeuvre* : action or plan cleverly executed.

P. 171, l. 17. *Bacon* : Swine's flesh, salted or pickled and dried.

P. 171, l. 19. *Levelled into an equality* : all being on the same footing, distinctions of rank or social position being suspended for the time.

P. 171, l. 23. *Levee at his door* : An assembly received by a sovereign or other great personage ; an assembly of visitors. The cobbler was thus waited upon.

P. 171, l. 23. *Haberdasher* : Dealer in small articles of dress, as ribbands, tape, etc.

P. 171, l. 26. *Distillery* : A place where distilling of alcoholic spirits is carried on.

P. 171, l. 26. *Brewery* : A place where brewing (of ale or beer) is done.

P. 172, l. 2. *Pathetic* : moving the feelings.

P. 172, l. 3. *Foreign drams* : Foreign wines and spirits.

P. 172, l. 7. *Mrs. Mayoress* : The full humour of the situation is not brought out. The plain hint is that some persons were voting for the candidate, because his candidature was supported by the once beautiful Mayoress.

P. 172, l. 7. *In liquor* : drunk.

P. 172, l. 11. *The magistrates* : i.e. members of Parliament.

P. 172, l. 13 *With anger . . . . punch* : a humorous anti-climax. *Punch* : a drink made up of five parts—spirit, water, lemon-juice, sugar and spice.

### LETTER L.

#### A City Night Piece :

Goldsmith, in a sentimental vein at its best, describes one of his experiences in the city of London, after midnight. The hour is artistically chosen. "The clock has struck two, the expiring taper rises and sinks in the socket, the watchman forgets the hour in the slumber, the laborious and the happy are at rest, and nothing wakes but meditation, guilt, revelry and despair." This sentence strikes the key-note and the very rhythm of the sentence helps to create the proper atmosphere. The essayist leaves his study, and comes out into the street where but a few hours past, there was such a bustle. "All the bustle of human pride is forgotten. An hour like this may well display the emptiness of human vanity."

The essayist naturally lets his fancy play with the theme. A time may come when the temporary solitude may be made continual, and the city itself fade away and leave a desert in its room. The history of the world shows that this is not impossible. Many cities, like Rome, have been ruined, for luxury and avarice made them feeble. Awaking from these thoughts, the essayist notes and wonders who they are that make the streets their couch. They are strangers, wanderers, orphans, and the poor shivering females betrayed by their lovers. The sense of their suffering is too great. Sincerely Goldsmith feels for them. "Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the sufferings of wretches I cannot relieve? Why was this heart of mine formed with so much sensibility, or why was not my fortune adapted to its impulse?" Then he concludes with the noble and sincere sentiment : Tenderness, without a capacity of relieving, only makes a man who feels it, more wretched than the object which sues for assistance."

Goldsmith waged a constant war against false sensibility, or sentimentality. From what we know of his life, we can certainly say that Goldsmith had a tender heart, which suffered at the thought that it could not relieve the distressed and the poor. The essay—'A City Night Piece'—is thus a direct revelation



of his personality. 'It is tremulous with that unfeigned compassion for the miseries of his kind, with which he walked the London streets'. How sincere this revelation has been may also be judged from the motto: 'He mourns truly, who mourns without a witness'. The style is charming, and the diction in particular is appropriate; and the atmosphere of a peaceful night (oppressive in its peace) is created with great skill. It is, indeed, a prose lyric, a gem of its kind.

(Note carefully the title of the essay. The word 'piece' in the title has nothing to do with 'peace' or quiet. It is a piece, a picture or an essay, describing a Night in the City of London.)

P. 172, l. 29. *The clock just struck two*: 2 A.M.; after midnight.

P. 172, l. 31. *The laborious*: Those who have laboured, worked hard during the day. The abstract nouns give a peculiar flavour of the eighteenth century poetry to this description.

P. 173, l. 3. *Guilty arm*: Because *suicide*, according to Christianity, is a sin. There is a divine command against suicide.

P. 173, l. 5. *Page of antiquity*: works of ancient authors.

P. 173, l. 6. *Sallies etc.*: original writings of the men of genius of the present time.

P. 173, l. 9. *Froward child*: This reminds us of a well-known passage from Sir William Temple: "When all is done, human life is, at the greatest and the best, but like a *froward child*, that must be played with and humoured a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the care is over."

P. 173, l. 15. *Emptiness of human vanity*: The hour may show how after all, all human things are vain. For sooner or later they come to nothing. They glitter for a while or make a brave show; but after a time, they are reduced to nothing or are sunk in oblivion.

P. 173, l. 17. *May be made continual*: This brilliant passage has struck the fancy of many writers, Macaulay among others.

P. 173, l. 19. *What cities*: Cities like, Babylon, Rome and others.

P. 173, l. 25. *Transience of every sublunary possession*: 'Sublunary', that is, under the moon or worldly. 'Transience'

is, therefore, the momentary or short-lived characters. How short-lived these things under the moon are !

P. 173, l. 29. *Luxury and avarice* : Goldsmith is, on the whole, right in thus generalising.

P. 173, l. 30. *Feeble* : weak and degenerate.

P. 174, l. 7. *mask* : pretence, hiding their real, mean or low character.

P. 174, l. 9. *But who are those* : After serious reflection, the essayist now indulges his emotion. Thus the three-fold division of the essay, description, reflection, and emotion is clearly marked.

P. 174, l. 9. *Make the streets their couch* : Slept in the streets.

P. 174, l. 16. *Disclaimed* : Cast off, disowned.

P. 174, l. 19. *Flattered into beauty* : So deceived by praise or fair words as to consider themselves beautiful.

P. 174, l. 28. *The most imaginary etc.* : existing only in imagination ; not real.

P. 174, l. 29. *Aggravated* : made to appear greater or more serious than they really are.

P. 174, l. 30. *Held up to engage etc.* : Are held up, are so described, that we are moved by them and feel sorrow in sympathy for them.

P. 174, l. 32. *Subordinate* : Minor.

P. 175, l. 1. *Sensibility* : Sensitiveness.

P. 175, l. 3. *Tenderness etc.* : A good example of a noble sentiment, nobly expressed.

## LETTER LI.

Goldsmith had much first-hand acquaintance with misery. He knew that the poor bear their misery calmly and without ostentation. Here is an example, almost taken from real life, of a wounded soldier, who was begging alms and who tells the author the whole of his history. Though his story is full of suffering and misfortunes, the wounded soldier bears it with remarkable cheerfulness. He has not a word of complaint against God or Fate. On the contrary, he seems to be thankful to Heaven.

If this were merely an imaginary story, it would not affect us so much. But we know that it is substantially taken from real

life; and that is why the cheerfulness shown by the beggar is so assuring.

This wounded soldier reminds us of the wooden-legged sailor whom the Man in Black relieved. As this is a more detailed sketch,—a full-length portrait,—it takes a greater hold of our mind than the former. The sketch of the wooden-legged sailor may be connected with the present one. For, the soldier really lost his leg on board a ship; and so, he might be even the sailor himself. When we remember Goldsmith's economy of material, of the fact that the same things are used over and over again, we are not surprised at this identity. The correct conclusion seems to be that the wooden-legged sailor was the first sketch and this, the detailed one, a later one. Goldsmith must have cultivated the acquaintance of the wooden-legged sailor and gathered these details.

P. 175, l. 10. *The misfortunes of the great*: The ideas are obviously the same as those expressed in the last essay: 'A City Night Piece.'

P. 175, l. 11. *Are enlarged upon, etc.*: Are set forth at great length, in moving words.

P. 175, l. 15. *Yet where is the magnanimity*: Goldsmith has expressed the same sentiment in an earlier essay (Original Letter No. LXVII).

P. 176, l. 23. *Thank heaven, it is not so bad with me*: What a noble sentiment it is!

P. 176, l. 28. *Put upon the parish*: The parish had to look after me, as I was an orphan.

P. 177, l. 4. *Mallet*: A small wooden hammer.

P. 177, l. 9. *had the liberty of the house*: was free to move about anywhere in the house.

P. 177, l. 11. *Bound out to a farmer*: bound by contract to serve the farmer for a number of years.

P. 177, l. 18. *spy'd*: spied, saw at a distance.

P. 177, l. 25. *breed, seed and generation*: my birth, parentage and family.

P. 177, l. 26. *could give no account of myself*: could not satisfy him by the explanation I gave.



P. 177, l. 27. *I was indicted* : I was charged with the crime. It brings out clearly the severity of the game-laws.

P. 177, l. 27. *Found guilty of being poor* : With grim humour, the man says that his only crime was that he was poor.

P. 177, l. 31. *I found Newgate* : I found the prison—the Newgate prison—much more agreeable. There is no false sentimentalism.

P. 178, l. 6. *Did not want meat* : did not feel the need of eating ; had no desire to eat.

P. 178, l. 12. *served out the time* : served for the full period contracted for.

P. 178, l. 13. *Worked my passage home* : paid for my passage by working.

P. 178, l. 15. *O liberty! liberty! liberty!* : The strength of this sentiment even in this wounded soldier shows, how genuine and deep, the feeling—love of liberty—among the English is.

P. 178, l. 22. *A press gang* : A gang or body of sailors empowered to impress men into the navy.

P. 178, l. 24. *Hobbled* : prevented me from enjoying freedom.

P. 179, l. 3. *Corporal* : the lower non-commissioned officer in the army.

P. 179, l. 11. *Boatswain* : (Pron. *bôsn*), an officer in charge of the boats, sails, etc. of a ship.

P. 179, l. 22. *Seasoned* : become accustomed to prison-life.

P. 179, l. 32. *One Englishman is able to beat, etc.* : Shows the boast and the popular opinion.

P. 180, l. 7. *Privateer* : An armed private vessel, commissioned by government to seize and plunder enemy's ships.

P. 180, l. 24. *One man is born with a silver spoon, etc.* : Some are born rich, some are born poor.

P. 180, l. 27. *the Justice of the Peace* : who sent me to jail, as I 'could give no account of myself'.

P. 180, l. 31. *An habitual, etc.* : One learns the virtues of fortitude and contentment best, only by passing through a life full of misery and suffering.

## / LETTER LII. •

To appreciate this essay properly, we must first understand that it is a parody of the usual travellers' tales. The object of



a parody is always to put to ridicule the original by imitation. Goldsmith wanted to show that his 'Chinese Letters', the tale of his traveller, was in a class entirely different from the usual, silly, matter-of-fact geographical travellers' books. They are only concerned with silly, external things, with recounting unimportant details, with putting forth fantastic conjectures and so on. The Chinese philosopher could not have ridiculed these 'travellers' tales' better than by this silly description of his own visit to the small hamlet of Kentish Town.

Only when we remember Goldsmith's purpose in writing this essay, we like the Essay and appreciate the subtle strokes in it—as for instance, his remarks on the dung-hill, his etymology of Pancras and so on. A parody exaggerates to some extent, and, we should remember that the usual travellers' tales, though silly, were not so silly as here represented.

P. 181, l. 7. *Solicit new happiness* : The observations of Goldsmith are really subtle and true.

P. 181, l. 9. *A life, I own, etc* : Yes, from one point of view, such a life is really wasted. But the philosopher is not ready to admit it. He would admit it, only if one is prepared to admit that all life is useless. Hazlitt's remark at the end of his essay, 'On Going a Journey', that he would spend a life in travelling abroad, if he were given another life to live at home, is worth considering. We must make most of our life here, in our own country, and must not waste it in mere travelling. Travelling is a means to an end, and not an end in itself.

P. 181, l. 15. *The wise bustle and laugh* : what a striking aphorism ! The wise and the fools alike bustle through life ; but the wise do not take it seriously, whereas the fools take it too seriously.

P. 181, l. 22. *Sufficient to call them by their names* : sufficient to take them at their worth ; to call a spade a spade. Some of us would maintain that the things of the world have an intrinsic value, call them by what name you will.

P. 181, l. 26. *There is one omission, etc.* : The mock gravity reveals the intended irony.

P. 181, l. 29. *Prolix* : tediously long and wordy ; dwelling too long on particulars.

P. 182, l. 2. *Catacombs* : subterranean galleries, with recesses, excavated in sides ; for tombs ; especially the famous Catacombs near Rome, where many of the early Christian victims of persecution were buried.

P. 182, l. 4. *Janizary* : Janissary—soldier of the old Turkish foot-guards.

P. 182, l. 15. *Shoe-lane* : Altangi's lodging was, at that day, conveniently central ; Shoe-lane, running due north, connected Fleet-street with Holborn.

P. 182, l. 20. *Kentish-town* : Altangi's journey to the north-west took place before the hamlet of Kentish Town was entirely swallowed up in the encroachments of the metropolis.

P. 182, l. 21. *Voyagers* : Travellers.

P. 182, l. 27. *Or they go afoot* : A true, but too commonplace a remark. Such silly, pointless remarks show the quality of the ordinary Traveller's books.

P. 182, l. 28. *eligible* : Fit to be chosen ; desirable.

P. 182, l. 31. *Dog-house Bar* : A bar, so called from its being near the *Dog-house*, where the city-hounds were kept. It stood at the junction of Old Street and the New Road. Altangi's country walk seems to have been taken from the Angel at Islington, along the New Road just then opened. (June 29, 1761).

P. 182, l. 33. *Enamelled* : Decorated. Goldsmith seems to laugh at the word as a trivial, favourite "poetic" phrase, for he has repeated the same word in this essay later on. Of course, there is good authority for the word, as it is used by Milton, in *Lycidas*.

P. 183, l. 2. *Effluvia* : (pl.) Disagreeable vapours rising from decaying matter.

P. 183, l. 3. *This dunghill*, etc. : we cannot help laughing at this ridiculous detail, specially chosen for observation. He very gravely blames the makers of the road for bringing it near the dung-hill.

P. 183, l. 13. *Turnpike gate* : A gate where carriages and others (but not the walkers) have to pay a toll.

P. 183, l. 13. *A long inscription* : The whole thing is ridiculed.

P. 183, l. 18. *Islington* : Goldsmith elsewhere betrayed a predilection for the then village of Islington, where, for some time indeed, he spent many a "shoe-maker's holiday."

P. 183, l. 28. *The White Conduit House* : A popular eighteenth century tea-house, which took its name from a conduit built to supply the Charterhouse with water. "It was", says Cunningham, "a kind of minor Vauxhall for the Londoners, who went for cakes and cream to Islington and Hornsey. The gardens lost their character early in the nineteenth century."

P. 183, l. 29. *Assembled to celebrate a feast* : These pompous words mean nothing more than that they ate in this hotel hot cakes and butter.

P. 184, l. 1. *Pancrass* : Goldsmith's etymology is consciously fanciful.

P. 184, l. 4. *meo arbitrio* : On my own authority. The Greek word in the text is 'Pan'.

P. 184, l. 11. *Kentish-town* : One editor suggests that the etymology of Kentish is probably 'Ken ditch', one of the beautiful drains. Perhaps it has nothing to do with the country of Kent. We need not blame Goldsmith, because he was, after all, parodying the manner of the foolish travellers.

P. 184, l. 12. *Champaign* : A fine level country.

P. 184, l. 16. *Impregnated* : Saturated.

### LETTER LIII.

Indeed, as Mr. Brocklington remarks, 'there is no inevitability in the *denouement* here', yet the end is as pleasant and as well managed as one can imagine. The story of Hingpo, of course, comes to an abrupt (surprising) end; for the beautiful niece of the Man in Black was Zelis, the Christian slave in the story, and so nothing more was required for her marriage with Hingpo. The young couple love each other ardently, and the elders are too glad to consent to their marriage. This part of the essay is weak, as it is conventional. However, it may be noted that advantage is taken of the wedding ceremony to bring together all the characters as in a tableau, for the *finale* of the story.

But when we turn to the courtship of the Man in Black himself, and almost expect, like all sentimental readers of romances, a second marriage—that of the Man in Black and the pawnbroker's widow, Goldsmith has a pleasant surprise in store for us. For, there is a quarrel as regards the proper way of carving a turkey, and the thrusts and parries are so pointed that their

relations are broken off. Only a humorist, and not a sentimentalist, could have given this turn to the story. Assuredly, all modern readers would appreciate it as more artistic than the mere conventional end of a happy marriage. Not only is this a stroke of art, but the noble remark of the Chinese philosopher, too, is equally artistic and satisfying. "The world being but one city to me, I do not care in which of the streets I happen to reside." And so he announces his intention of travelling from country to country in the company, not of his son, but of the Man in Black. Nobody could have foreseen this end, and yet on looking back on it, one has to admit that it is satisfying. Therein lies Goldsmith's greatness.

P. 185, l. 8. *I left him a boy* : The antithesis is neatly set forth.

P. 185, l. 9. *Hardened by travel and polished by adversity* : Very good phrases.

P. 185, l. 15. *Has repaid* : has amply made up for all the misery and suffering by now bringing him a moment of supreme joy.

P. 185, l. 18. *Guess our surprise* : It is also a surprise to the reader. He is hardly prepared for this end. It is one of the clumsy devices, so often found in comedies, romances etc.

Mr. Brockington calls this identification of the Persian slave with the niece of the Man in Black, "as clumsy a device as may be found in the whole range of English fiction." Goldsmith could have softened the shock of surprise, if he cared to do so. But as it was a very minor point, he did not at all worry about it.

P. 185, l. 30. *Nature has . . . . match-maker* : This trait is in keeping with the character of Altangi, as he has already explained his views on marriage. Perhaps, it is not an autobiographic touch.

P. 186, l. 11. *Tender* : Sentimental ; inclined to love.

P. 186, l. 13. *A pig-tail wig* : Lord Bolingbroke introduced a short tail to the wig, in 1706, in place of the fashionable full-bottomed variety of the reign of Anne. This grew, about 1745, to the pig tail.

P. 186, l. 15. *The whole company easily perceived* etc. : Those who know the end, will find irony in the situation.



P. 186, l. 28. *Jogging* : 'Jog' is to push (with the elbow or the hand).

P. 186, l. 30. *Antiquated* : out of date, both of them being too old.

P. 187, l. 5. *Piqued herself* : Prided herself upon.

P. 187, l. 15. *We are never too old*, etc. : It means properly that we can learn at any time, it is never too late to learn. Similarly, one is never too old to learn. There is, indeed, no reference to their age in the remark, and yet the pawn-broker's widow misunderstands it and takes it as a reflection on her own age.

P. 187, l. 17. *When I die of age* : When she will grow old, there are others, meaning the man in Black himself, who will grow too old and would be quaking with old age.

P. 187, l. 24. *Keep your distance* : know your own position, and do not be on intimate terms with me.

P. 187, l. 30. *The smallest accidents disappoint treaties* : Thus the philosopher generalises and points out how treaties—marriage-treaties as well as other treaties—are upset by petty accidents. Nobody could have foreseen such a conclusion. Yet a few hot remarks, a bit of misunderstanding proved disastrous.

P. 188, l. 6. *My son . . . . are fixed here* : Hingpo and Zelis would stay here in London, where they would live for life.

P. 188, l. 10. *The world being but one city to me* : As I am a 'Citizen of the World.'

P. 188, l. 14. *They must often change, etc.* : The remark is quite true. In the words of Shaw, "The law of change is the law of God." In this changing world, nothing can be static. Wisdom must ever advance. And as for happiness, there must be ever new objects for it.

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